

# The beauty of vietnamese poetry: ca dao essay sample

[Countries](#), [Vietnam](#)



## **Organization**

Introduction:

The literary treasures of third world countries are often lost in the melee of the practical problems that afflict these nations. In the wake of the war, there happened to be a person who somehow ventured to retrieve the lost assets of Vietnamese folk culture and ended up creating a beautiful compilation of poetry which we now know as Ca Dao. It is not that Ca Dao is a modern avatar of Vietnamese poetry; on the contrary, it is one of the oldest. However, thanks to the likes of John Balaban, the world is now aware of its spellbinding aspects. Ca Dao means a “ song with short unfixed melody” which is mainly a form of lyrical poetry, accompanied with a melody. It is sung by the peasants and farmers in most parts of Vietnam, and the first person narrative is so alluring that it does not even require any musical instrument to enhance its charm (Balaban).

### **Balaban and Ca Dao:**

John Balaban, a professor of English in Creative Writing and a poet-in-residence of North Carolina ventured to seek and find the long lost poetry of the Vietnamese folk culture. The time of this venture is quite contradictory to its nature, as Balaban set off in search of music and lyrics in the wake of the Vietnam War. He scouted across villages and settlements in search of Ca Dao, with little hope of ever finding any relevant text or document pertaining to the same. But his efforts were rewarded when he realized that Ca Dao was still alive in every farmer or peasant whom he met, and they all sang out their poetry for him. To his amazement and joy, he ended up with recordings

of over 500 Ca Dao poetries and compiled 50 of them, which he later translated as modestly as he could. Balaban's translation of Ca Dao not only enriched the seemingly failing Vietnamese traditional folk poetry but also presented it in a global platform to attract admirers from all across the world.

### **The Beauty of Ca Dao:**

The beauty of Ca Dao lies in its simplicity. The poems talk about human feelings like love and hope, nature and its elements, people and their emotions and many such aspects which are so common in our lives that we often fail to realize their worth, let alone write poetry about them. The melodies are soft and soothing and entwine with the lyrics in perfect harmony. The true essence of Ca Dao is maintained by the fact that even though it was equally liked by the rich and the poor, it was in the end the commonplace folks who preserved it. The creators of Ca Dao were quite unfamiliar with the nuances of a city life and for them; the freedom of expression which Ca Dao offered was all they could revel in. So, for the peasantry, Ca Dao was more like a means of expression and less like literary heirlooms. They were seldom literate enough to pen down their imaginations, and thus Ca Dao was preserved in the being and in the life of Vietnamese culture as an orally inherited treasure.

Example of Ca Dao:

**Reference:**

Balaban, John. Translating Vietnamese Folk Poetry: John Balaban's Ca Dao. Ann Arbor, MI: MPublishing, University of Michigan Library Winter 2005, 2014. Print.