

The Poetry of Li Yawei 李亚伟

Selections: 1984-1993

Li Yawei was born in the town of Youyang in Sichuan in 1963. After poetry activities at university in Nanchong, Li Yawei joined with these poetry friends and Hu Dong, a university student in Chengdu, to form the Macho Man 莽汉 group in January 1984. Li was a major contributor to Sichuan's many unofficial poetry journals, and was well known – and popular – for his poetry recitations and talent with the guitar. In March 1990, he and five others (including Liao Yiwu and Wan Xia) were detained for counter-revolutionary agitation and held for two years without charge before all but Liao were released. Li now works in publishing, but continues to write poetry, if not as much as he did before his arrest.

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The Chinese Department [中文系] 1984

The Chinese department is a great well-baited river
in the shallows, a professor and a group of lecturers are casting nets
the netted fish
when brought up on the bank become teaching assistants, later
they become secretaries for Qu Yuan,¹ the retinue of Li Bai²
and kings in tales for children, then
go to cast their nets again

Sometimes, an old woman like a tree trunk
comes to the river dock --- the place Lu Xun washed his hands
whips up some long since stagnant soap suds
and has children eat them. An old man
while at the lectern quick-fries weeds
and throws in some expired MSG
those who want to consume weeds³ completely and the edges of flowers⁴
deposit Lu Xun in a bank and eat the interest

On the upper reaches of the river, Confucius is still angling
some profs use the tufts of beards as fishing line
and in the name of Confucius lay out the innumerable people they've hooked
when the bell sounds on the steps of lecture theatres
stairs and the lattice of windows raise up waves of the setting sun
a small bespectacled fish is still on its own chewing the bait
being a big poet in antiquity leading a band of small poets in writing poems
writing the rock that Wang Wei⁵ wrote
some stupid golden carp or a foolish silver one
in term-end fishing interrogations will probably
be slapped with exams and quickly stumble out the door

The teacher told us to be great men
we must eat their leftovers and recite their coughs
Yawei wants to be a great man
 wants to work together with the great men of antiquity
everyday he coughs up all sorts of sounds from the library
to the dormitory

¹ The earliest named Chinese poet.

² Also transliterated as Li Po, a Tang dynasty poet.

³ A reference to Lu Xun's work of prose poetry, *Weeds* (野草) (1927).

⁴ Lu Xun's collection of essays, more properly translated as *Literature by the Flowers* (花边文学), is here translated differently according to the clear intentions of Li.

⁵ A Tang dynasty nature poet.

Sometimes in the reading room Byron speaks in anastrophic sentences
man is floodwater because woman is too small a riverbed
children in groups of boys and girls go to the riverbank to practice
and when Zola begins to lecture in the teahouse
man is floodwater because woman is an old wood deep in a mountain
some naughty carp come ashore to go to West mountain, mount Hua⁶

After Yawei and friends read Zhuangzi
they imitated white clouds and loitered on mountaintops
went to let fall the spring rains of pre-Han times
a portion of these pals
on the weekend after gnawing on crusty bread still want to
chew the eighth level of *Inferno*, until they sleep
under duvets still feeling the ferocity of hellfire
sometimes unsleeping they rock their bodies
through the portals of thought swimming into burning cinemas
or other places inappropriate to mention

First-year students, those
little goldfish, gold carp still not frequent eaters
of bacteria in libraries and teahouses often moor in classrooms or
beside fellow-villagers sometimes under tables of the Queen of Spades
joyfully shuttling to and fro

Poet Hu Yu is an old hand at social intercourse
but he isn't very good at roller-skating, so
on his long hair he often slides into
places where female students congregate and uses his cheeks
to sing of evening breezes blowing over Peng Hu bay
more often he's with Yawei
in the cracks between stones in pubs spitting out all kinds of gas bubbles

Twenty-four-year-old Brother Ao
hasn't written a poem in twenty-four years
but is a poem himself
forever loving a girl from five meters' distance
on holidays sending half-price telegrams
due to not remembering if Han Yu⁷ was Chinese or Russian
Brother Ao tragically dropped a grade, he wanted to escape
but feared that when he crawled up on a Hongkong beach the police would
immediately haul him away to a classical Chinese language test

Everyday after getting out of bed Wan Xia's problem is
whether to keep eating or

⁶ This and the following two stanzas are commonly left out of anthologized versions of this poem.

⁷ A Tang dynasty poet.

never to eat again
together with his girlfriend after selling his old clothes
the signal to drink often buzzes in his head
the angry waves of the Yellow river, in a corner hangs
in his body like a water faucet strike
a missing-persons poster and his easel

Little Mianyang the sworn brother of us all
after taking a month to read half a page in a textbook went to the cafeteria
picked up his food and also picked a fight with a cook
yet ultimately he was blown out of the shallows
by the deep-water mine put together by model-student Jiang
now no one knows at which far-off bus stop he's starving to death

The Chinese department's like this
students worship the ancients and Wang Li⁸ and the blackboards by day
and by night worship the silver screen or just as easily
chase women through the streets
Chinese department girls normally only mix with department boys
there's no time to speak with kids of other departments
this demonstrates the department's capacity for self-reliance
that medical school golden girl Yawei loved in the dew
was pawned off for a long time to a skinny monkey in history
but finally returned to Yawei
he is the founding father of attacks on the medical school he refused to negotiate
there's a possibility of medical school girls all dying young and the medical school
having the glorious possibility to be the wife-school of the Chinese department

Poet Yangyang is always planning
to marry a girl he's just met always
gliding up to the food voucher gambling table with a shark face
this thug is acquainted with four cooks
but to this day still doesn't know the writing class teacher
he once had the brilliant idea that the textile plant
is a cinema and the cinema is a delicious hot-pot
the hot-pot is the medical school and the medical school is knowledge
knowledge is a book and books are women
women are tests
and each man better make the grade

The Chinese department flows on like this⁹
professors in lectures move about murmuring
once students find the key words

⁸ The editor of the standard textbook on classical Chinese language in China.

⁹ These final six stanzas are often reedited as three, and those three are even further abbreviated, taking lines willy-nilly from the six.

outside they write them into a vortex write out
the traps the profs probably set
blowing the gas bubbles spat out by mumbling
profs out on tree-shaded avenues at term's end

The professors also ride on their gas bubbles
floating down as if their hands hold a long mythical spear
like a Boxer general patrolling on a river
on that side of the river saying “zhi”¹⁰ on this side “hu”
on encountering a situation the prof alertly asks the password: “zhe”
in the dark a student answers “ye”

According to twenty-two rules of military conduct the leaders order
students' thought to be free order students
not to talk nonsense at assemblies of any size
the twenty-two rules of military conduct require that professors urge students
to bring forth new fruit but when reporting back to waitresses in pubs
not to soil final exam papers

The Chinese department also studies foreign literature
primarily Baudelaire and Gorky, one evening
a flustered looking lecturer raced out of the toilets
he shouted: Students
disperse immediately, there's a modernist inside

The Chinese department flowed on ancient battlefields
on professors cherishing chastity and profound artistic conceptions of the moon
beneath which flowed female defenders of their own chastity running on riverbanks
the stone caverns were seated full of widows loyal to Du Fu
and third concubines seated full of the humiliated concubines of scholars

The Chinese department flowed from the ancient path of Ma Zhiyuan¹¹
later took on the identity of an object
and was placed before life by a passive sentence
today the Chinese department flows onto the lectern of the Mao Duns¹² and Ba Jins¹³

Sometimes the Chinese department flowed in dreams, slowly
like the waves of urine Yawei pisses on the dry earth like the disappearing
then again rising footprints behind the pitiful roaming little Mianyang, its waves
are following piles of sealed exams for graduation off into the distance

¹⁰ Zhi 之, Hu 乎, Zhe 者, Ye 也: these four words are characters of many meanings and frequent occurrence in classical Chinese language.

¹¹ A Yuan dynasty play-write of classical nationalistic *zaju* 杂剧 drama (ca. 1250- between 1321 and 1324).

¹² A writer of fiction (1896-1981).

¹³ A Chengdu-born writer of fiction (1904-2005).

Hard Men [硬汉] (summer 1984)

Ever since we were pushed aside by the summer
by yesterday
by sofas and girlfriends
shoved out the door
Like a forehead into the naked world of autumn
We've been outside belching and putting up with winds and frosts
Running into walls, walking thorny paths
We are still watching the sun
watching the moon
Excited about this pair of colons
We're still beating bitterly at the day
making surprise attacks on the night
We, these stirred up bottles of white lightning
this herd of bolting long-legged wine glasses
Basically we're
Porcupines with poems dangling from our waists
we're dubious characters
Submerged drifting masts
We've seen August
shrivel up and die on a branch, we've seen
Women in mirrors, admirable things
We've seen death, still want to see it, and therefore
Accept a bribe of red lips
With proud anti-missile missiles
take aim at the head rising in the sky
We file out through the mountain passes of Li Bai's and Mao Zedong's poetry
We file out through the Chinese department, enter life
With heads and teeth, with arbitrary decisions
Qigong¹⁴ and obscenities contradict the door to love
We'll hit women in their faces
With sonnets by Petrarch
Attack with UFOs
Smash one or two school presidents and department heads on their craniums
Pound strangers' faces into the dirt
Compel the women to pull out the love belted tightly under their trousers

Proudly, of our own will, we drop out of school
Smash mummy and daddy on those damn text books
Make dates with an insatiable desire for poverty, hesitantly we pawn our wrist watches
Let mainstreet look askance at me
Let's be above fooling about together by fooling about together

¹⁴ A method of exercise incorporating meditation, breathing and positional exercise which regulate the body's life force.

We're UFOs

love letters of unknown origin
a piece of doggerel written by plain people

Often we suspect we're probably the best poets
The same as distrust every one of your body's organs
You must believe yourself a great poet
Just like you believe yourself a most excellent yellow-skinned fellow

Go and umpteen times toss away

Cigarette butts

Go and take close looks at

women

Go, and along with the roads choke the whole mountain
along with the trackers for the boats pull the Yangtse straight
with the Yangtse force the sea back

Set out and see our vast world

see the wasteland history has left to us

Let's go

my hard men

The Cornered Beast [困兽] (August, 1985)

In flight he feels free

His blood vessels follow the run of mountain ranges and become a great roaring, convulsing river
His eyeballs follow the roll of a bird in flight
His feet are hijacked by a pair of mankind's shoes
Everyday war breaks out in his head, his brains explode and rise up as mushroom clouds
Hung in markets his lungs and his liver are the most desolate unsaleable commodities under the sun
His chopped entrails are fought over by flies and mosquitoes
His heart is cooked, sliced up to become a side dish for a solitary foreigner drinking and thinking
of home
His body needs a sound heart, he forces himself into a hospital
Like in a fight he takes a fierce punch
A pair of hands strap him tightly to a sick bed
A tube is placed in his left arm, his right is needled and injected at will
And unceasingly stamped by official embossed steel seals

He finally runs away
In flight he feels free

He is moving towards giant boulders and deep ravines, towards forests gulping great breathe of
hurricanes
Towards lofty mountain ranges and desolate open spaces
He runs on his four limbs, uses fur in place of the burden of clothing
Along the way he casts off his helmet and armour; hopes, glasses, women, sex, love all gone
Without the slightest hesitation he discards history, memory, imagination, language and facial
expressions
He becomes an It and grows horns and hooves
Behind it is the rattle of firing bolts of hunters' rifles
Its ears press tightly back against its neck, its tail curls into its crotch fishing for life while in flight

Its fur is cheap its life will not always be to mankind's taste because of the juice in its meat
Its hopes are anti-hopes are boring his happiness is not worth bearing on its agile animal feet
Its horn and gray fur, its dull trade mark
But it can't change the wounds in its body once again
It doesn't ponder muddled problems: dogs doing slave labour cattle eating straw, men eating
food god eating clouds
It just wants to howl long and hard at the sky
And produces a solitary resulting impulse: run

While running it feels alive and profoundly experiences freedom

It becomes a black shadow like a vision of nature wildly skimming over open country

Behind it a bundle of sunlight's arrows pursue and shoot forests and the black night fly up from
the earth

The muffled corpses from the death knell spread outward to the frontiers of sight

Finally it stands at the predestined place

Hunters arrive like rays of light, bullets arrive like rays of light, a brilliant life

like rays of light concentrated on this resplendent moment

The vast wilderness, it raises its head and comes to understand

unparalleled sorrow:

I can not run, I'll never need to run

It takes tight hold of the handle of the life of mankind with a long drawn-out howl

The It becomes a he

While in flight he deeply felt the magnificence of life

Yet

At his back is a wall

A protective screen fixed to his body isolating grasslands and mountain ranges from dreams

His blood vessels and energy paths are jumbled together with electrical and iron wires

Houses are his skin

Windows are necklaces for his freed head

O precipitous life of man

He can't shake it, can't transcend it, and everything is so colossal and without even one crack

The large buildings overlook him, envelop him

The streets kidnap his steps

And in each office is an ill-tempered clock waiting to strike him with its sound

The times are helplessly drunk down, sat out, exterminated by convention

Each weekend he is purchase-ordered by a phone call

afterwards together with the dusk he is killed by friends and women

All the different art forms only cause his yearning to suddenly rise up like a chimney

Cause his dark breath to smoke himself into a higher state

In dreams the spiritual loftiness, these elevations above sea level and these high buildings always
toss him off the planet

He lives on the top of a building as one would live on the tip of a rocket

He yearns to withdraw, retreat is the most beautiful form of flight

He rushes down from the highest point in the city

He feels stairs attracting his feet like the breath of a wild beast

He hopes the stairs descend deep into the earth, deep into remote antiquity deep into his origins

(all running organisms know their final destination, there
were they hold their heads high in terror before setting out)

He still feels he is running in a forest

His fur brushes against brambles and past, behind there is a roar of rifles being cocked

An Ancient Friend [古代朋友] (1986)

Are you dead, Tao Yuanming¹⁵
Afterwards your poetry was cloth-bound by a commercial print house
Your poems are dissected by old men in universities
But my poetry will push all this aside
Entitled as a district magistrate my verse is commanding armies to march south

In the south that glistening white desolate moon
is opening up earth's wine cellar, the sounds of dogs and chickens
The scent of the peach blossom garden¹⁶ while cooking
A beautiful simple song brews a strong dark night

Tao Yuan-ming ah Tao Yuan-ming I have no money tonight
This evening my lines are searching for the fisherman by the river
Wanting to strip off a worn-out imagination to exchange for a braised fish

Often when alone drinking cold wine I find
The braised fish come carrying nets circling me
Old Tao, for a long time now braised fish hasn't been a dish to eat while drinking strong liquor
Now even those who love us only drink beer
My verse stops at the riverside and is weeping after antiquity

¹⁵ 陶渊明: A famous pastoral poet, 372-427 C.E..

¹⁶ An earthly paradise as described in Tao's writings.

Crowded World [世界拥挤] (1987)

Autumn is too narrow, people can't keep their feet
Always squeezed out by something
Stand on the dock watching others come down off the boat
Fit quickly into the crowd
Watch the stone steps keep their composure
Slip suddenly into the water and hinting at
A way out

The dock is anchored to autumn
A column of geese is edged out of the sky
On the road home
You are pushed to one side by your own imagination
You must live out the whole afternoon alone
 living in this view, from far away

The Inn [酒店]

- for my drinking buddies and my lover

I kick down the doors of all inns with my feet For years
I've wanted to fall into the hollow of your hand Innkeeper

I want there to be an inseparable relationship between us
I want to make love to you amid the dim sensations
My drinking is merely
A process of wounding Afterwards
The wound will quietly recall many things

You should install freedom in a wine-cup too There should be
Something in you that is rapidly exchanged Innkeeper
At least you understand what giddy is The giddiness
Leans against the other side of life Long ago
Nothing could smother the smell of blood
Duty-bound it pours out

Idle Words While Drinking [酒聊]

I want to leave me

Along with my bones I slide down

Well, god dammit, I feel a little more relaxed

A lot of hands lift me up

For a long, long time

I open my eyes and see

A guy in the crowd, his head raised, looking over at me

Holding out an empty bottle

I think

What have I been drinking

The place of my birth

Has long been absolutely drained

While I Was Standing [我站着的时候]

If you'd only dare take one look at me
I'd take a good straight look at you, woman
Ever since I was born until now, I've been idle with nothing to do

Do you know what I want to do as I stand here
What do you suppose a person's greatest sorrow is
Certainly not that feeling of loneliness while standing at the top of a pagoda

I'm sad
And I stand this way
Because there's a thing about this world

Would you want to use the old ways of the others
We can wait until evening and walk in the outskirts of the city
When we've wandered into a private accord we'll stand by the river face to face
Would you like to let the moon get a hand in

The countryside around and about is vast
Vast these outskirts are
Because you're not there

The Flight [飞行] (April 1989)

The wings of opium passed over the ocean and finished the last reconnaissance
The smallest black spot in the mind circles in the ether of the sky overhead
The people have already stopped harvesting
The limitless worries of wheat in the field are aimed silently at the sky
Collective memories closed on the individual after nightfall

I am still he who travelled farthest
I crossed a great river on a horse and drift in the dry wind
And beneath the stars I crossed a sheet of paper, carrying the characters of the written language
with me and its school
Linking it finally to a hand signal at the end of the road

I've considered everybody and everything, finished off my time up north in a glance
At the small entrances to the stair of my eyelids, gigantic pupils are turning toward deep night
Shooting out memories of past events, crossing the great plain under the starry sky
Since the train passes through my eyes, it is departing from the last station
Drumming a rhythm along a fragrance, the steam whistle blows among the flowers
In the seats passengers are all your innocent tears dripping south

This train has no way of stopping, because it is nothing else aside from noise
It blew through fragrant powder, it's quite simply the blooming of a flower
One woman rises from the earth, after she is full grown she reaches the heavens
She knows area is equal to death, the volume and the memory must be brought in before the night
falls
She has already seen through herself, so she can come in and out of skin at will
Because skin is only one atmosphere around the person
Like the south it has never been a place, just a sound

The celestial body is moving ever closer now, I ride a horse up onto the star's glow
A girl is passing through her loveliest age, halts and thinks of me
A beautiful girl is a colour going from one place to another
At eighteen she thinks of rainbows, then passes beyond fragrance
And I am able to do nothing but come down out of the heavens and love her

And a dove swifter than all other doves, becomes a flower of colour
Passing through books of poetry beyond the atmosphere, I saw the sky ahead too blue
Because water of the sea was beginning to soar up, rising to the sky
At this time I let myself go, like one left hand letting go of another, and take hold of my soul
Drawing a vast stretch of skin, I washed in the sky
Blasts of wind folded it over, bound into lines upon ocean waves
And then they too let go, spraying the Pacific at the sandy beaches
Freckling the sky like a child

Now the fish also let loose and form the hub of the oceans

Those people who love me are wings
For imagination is a flower, and blooming goes from one place to another
Those people who remember me
Fly above the treetops upside down at dusk or fall onto islands
Those people who keep a lookout for me have actually gone beyond reading
For every time the horse loses its footing on a word it creates a chance encounter
To fall off a horse this way is simply a happy fate
Like a flower blooming, it is quite simply a scent that has spread wings

At your place of origin, along the pupils of the liquor bottles the cellar's look is rolling
Showing that alcohol doesn't get itself drunk, sixty-five proof won't numb the fifty-seven
Alcohol is just one of those things that fly off on their own
But you can't lower your head and stare down, this isn't any different from the assiduous study of
texts
Page by page the waves of the ocean are flipped open
Reading sail upon sail from the strait to the cape

Land on the opposite shore and you won't die
You're thinking of heavenly things, you have to only think of how high the clouds are
And it equals riding a horse
it sends you farther than turning the pages of a book one by one
Probably your fall off the horse happened between the words and the lines
Because you ducked your head and looked down, it may have taken shape in a script
But it isn't important, you're totally illiterate, even wanting to die isn't easy

I am still the one who travelled the farthest
Because after renouncing isolated entanglements circling in the air became very desirable
Just like the returning of wheat in autumn fields to the sky
I gallop like a horse, like the long hairs of the wind trailing the whitest clouds
Just like the view of the autumn seen by people riding the wings of opium,
driving the great ether wind and climbing up to the heights to gather it in

We [我们] (September 1989, at Wudang Mountain)

Our camels change shape, when it comes down to it
Our line is fake now, we are still strugglers
We cross deserts and streams to learn culture
We are reflected on to the coast by a mirage
Plain features, easily forgotten or caressed
We are drowned by feelings, let loose from the contradictions today
Happiness, concerned over the final goal, joins up with us
Brings up the rear in a horse drawn carriage

We are the flowers of our youth, bunched together
Learning from and confusing each other
Extending along the vines, often led
To become part of the masses and experienced men
Fading away in the desert, and refracted out by the sea
Three years ago, cheeky and engaged to be married
We came by boat, inquired into life and death, explored philosophies
A force that could have split bamboo
We mastered the essentials, crossed snow-capped mountains and the Ganges
Into another person's home

We come up from the sea, we must find housing
We come from the desert, we must have food and clothing
We come from two sides, enter realms and seek the forbidden, knock at doors asking guidance
Having crossed over winter and ice, we enter the very fibre of the skin
Holding weapons of despair, the sighing organs
Comprehend, have a deep understanding of the gist of it
We come from the antipodes of labour and harvest
We come from the two sides of flower and fruit
Through study on our own, we become the people
Our camels are reflected onto an island
Our vessels are projected into books
And become phenomena, vague and indistinct
Mutually replaceable, mutually imagined
Moving straight onward, creating logic
We assess the explorations and develop in another direction
Trickling across creeks, swamps, ascending onto The Great Way
We have fixed plans and miss the point by miles

We come to the city from the antipodes of food and clothing
We come onto the street from the two sides of good and bad
Alone, lean, we meet and want to drink
We hate the lateness of our meeting, by marriage brought together

By technology driven apart
These three years, we learned from the past, fell in love
Died off in new places, and beg in the old
Three years later, we go into the West, at the forefront of knowledge
Clogging the streets, definitions change
Thinking it through, our numbers increase, we can't be depleted

We come from the antipodes of one and two, carrying poetry and knives
We meet, and love reduces our number by one
We pass through a city of pagodas, are miraged out to sea
Never to return
Again we come from the antipodes of one and two
Diligent in our studies, coughing up blood in our youth
Industrious, self-improving, with talent to spare
Forever inquiring after learning and childbirth, striking the ovum onto stone

We come to the village from the antipodes of seed and fruit
Exchange experiences, approve of each other
We come to the market town from the antipodes of buying and selling
We disappear in the exchange, become pearls
Become her floral handkerchief, and she striding out in front of her husband
The first-loved and remembered by her
An unending stream of traffic, restraint, we judge others by their appearances

We come up from the surface
We suffer a sudden interweave on the antipodes of longitude and latitude
We throw ourselves into weaving, form patterns, raise our heads and attain love
Wearing flowered clothing we throw ourselves into revolutions, and meet up with The Leader
We wander round, cross borders, and earn ourselves another
Though we might only be walking on the street
It's also a product of dreams, nothing is real or unreal
Anyway you look at it, all are characters of the imagination
Walking outside, yet sticking precisely to contours of thought

The Big Booze [大酒]

Year after year
that is time after time
that's drop after drop
one man one woman

between written words and birds
pulling out a long long sound

from north to south
from see to hear
going you're a bird
coming a fish
just then you saw a cloud
he and she
the air and a mountain range
wine and water
a hawk comes down out of the sky to link it all –

answers and questions
like sword and scabbard
inside is the moon
the sun
farther in is one and two
big and small
a boat carries the smallest away

and white and black
let loose a pony
now it stampedes over your game of chess
stampeding being and nonbeing

line after line of waves of inquiry
disappear on the shore of this huge wine cup
but I only see
between heaven and earth
one big thing
a distant thing
year after year
time after time

The Nostalgic Red Flag [怀旧的红旗] A sequence of 18 poems, 1992-1993

#1

This stretch of dry land is the navy's last giant fin
Masts, flags and unshakable principles are planted on top
The telescope sees the problems brought by leaders and philosophy in the distance
It falls in on itself, examines the reasons why hardship and new-born things arrive
My virtue and heart illness are also spied out by a peach blossom eye on Mars

This stretch of land is an eye that gazes and is gazed upon
It stands up high, sees far, is seen by farther-off alpine yarrow too
Like a ship returning from a distant voyage, the eyes among sailors and crowds discover each other
All that cannot be clearly seen is death, words written before the revolution

Because the compasses have all been collectively given to whales, as if presenting the nation to the
navy
I'm not speaking of an island nation, at war firing coke, clothing and contraceptives at nomadic
nationalities
I'm saying that what returns from radar emanations at base areas is resentment and memory
I'm not speaking of a piece of history, because that piece has errors

Because the compasses were carried to Europe by whales that charged up beaches, supplied to an
inland nation to manufacture clocks
Because a big fish was the first to present its gills to a passing warship
Because history is only time, coup d'etats and making money
I'm saying the colonizers need space and philosophy, need technology and news of lovers
So what I speak of is the wireless, a carrier wave and a satellite
What comes back when it fires on a base is Buddhist gatha and Confucian mysticism
Raised up to philosophy, it's enough to occupy the heads of a generation

#2

Like this, the color red will probably appear on the horizon, like that daily dawn
It and talent arrive overly early, forming the early wisdom of an individual
Attracting the nation's attention, precocity and young love constantly bump into virgins

But things like this that happen ahead of schedule only startle the composition of a poem into mind
It starts with a lyrical tone, winds up with vile habits
Luckily, I'd already moved well away from reading in advance
On one hand laboring on the other feigning innocence, because labor is a part of fruit
Another part is a water situation, because a part of fish is water too
Another part is brawls and fines, because my knowledge also is only a part
Another part is a useless thing, because I also belong to the useless part
That part is also useless, I mean the encroaching collective body and the individual
Their separation is the pursuit of progress, brought together they'll have another brawl
And brawls are also only a part of war, wars propelled the progress of the whole
The masses are the margin, its core is the reproductive organ

But there are still people different from the crowd, vile habits hidden deep unrevealed
That is the countryside's naughty late rice, stubborn in summer, agreeing to be food for the people
only in late autumn
He is another face of the collective, still part of it in the end
A hero is also another face of the people, belonging to it in the end
Because The People is merely the margin of war, its core portion is part of the calm
Separated from the masses, because that is death

#3

On the horizon a swallow flies to and fro shooting arrows
That which can pass through spring is the bird in the pupil of the eye, also the far-off look from a
foreign land
That which can pass through bullet casings and arrive at school is childhood
That which can shuttle to and fro in lifelong weaving is only the color of first love!

A long letter cannot open a person's name, a hill covered in fruit can't solve a riddle
A discharged soldier can't open chastity, memorials to the throne and the sound of bells cannot
open me either!
These days weaving can't open up the darkest color, because that's a dead love
Belonging to long hair, big eyes and a heart that can't think its way free!

But a conch opened the sea, the sailboat that sets out amid seeing someone off
Coming or going all are returning prodigal sons. Incoming letters open the garden
First love's lightest color, once a pear altered by a small path
Because that is to be tall, belonging to skin, clothing and age
Tree branches also opened the sky, the swallow tail's pretty scissors pass back and forth clipping!

#4

Swimming in dreams is like reading and getting sick
Ten lines at a glance or incapacitated, that is the shallowest sand bar
Also when perfect wisdom was attained, so clear and shallow a river I saw my own character and
learning
Like a woman, what is seen in the mirror is someone else's younger sister
An open peach blossom an even simpler inner being

Generals and soldiers guarding the frontier are also in a philosophically perfect realm
Horse stars fall on their midnight hour, the horses come upon a border stockade
They spend their lives as roving guards on the top of things, standing sentry and reconnoitering
They are the nucleus of households and agriculture, push them away and you find a bullet
The bandage of the borderline bounces them back to their fathers
But they report to the commander and stand at the front line of things, clear and simple

But I know, even though sharp sentries patrol the borders of dreams
At the slightest incaution, novel things and omens pierce my inner being
An agonizing, warm fragrant juice flows out

#5

My heart is higher than the sky, my writing more beautiful than sisters of the trade
Riding a horse standing on the road to literary tests, surveying the revolution
On earth seeds lead agriculture forward, seeping into the body of the people
Therefore the insurrection comes from irrigation, superstition and the mingling of plants
The time is autumn, from straight south to north creeping into genetics and the dances of local
bandits

As a heart takes on a beautiful appearance after it's encircled by skin
Or a meaning sung out by lips becoming the red-crested crane in the sound of the song

On the same principle, a heart commands the whole of life and conquers all under heaven
It's incapable of ruling, seeds cannot rule flowers, emperors cannot rule clouds
Poets occupy written words, form a partial sovereignty, and rule the land from a horse
Causing the people to change from identical garb into martial attire, from insufficient harvests to a
unitary diet

Love sprouts later than hate, it grows fruit before date trees and reddens the entire face and a letter
of the heart's resolve

This is a body violently demanding suicide seeing me with her heart
The man freeing horses in that autumn's telescope, makes her glad to be taken
Ask to be exterminated by a heart
But my worship of her has already grown into enslavement
Riding my horse on my way toward a society of slaves

#6

My hold over a lover can only be part of an armed occupation
As many years later I thoroughly clean my heart and skin my face
This fruit this brings to my life is merely the restoration of old problems or the recurrence of seed
against seed
I fly down off my horse and rape a noun or in letters embrace a narrow waist
The freed horse stamps over living and dying words modestly making way for fabulous rivers and
mountains all along the way

But history's backward flow carries more situations and changed my worth
So my character is the echo of somebody else
During a night of wild gambling I imitate the wins and losses of somebody else, I squandered all
my skin and teeth
Dragging the nation that's just come into my hands I flee to the north searching for horse-hooves to
use in seeding
And use plasters to read soldiers' letters mailed out of wounds

The crux of all this is still the problem of ownership
I fly up onto my horse and escape from inner being, enter into a vaster universe
The world is not mine, also not yours
But love is still violence, politely expressed beheading and imprisonment
Like life and death, originating in the primeval allotments of early history
The ten thousand things all equally shared, and born by the inner being of each

#7

In the sky a hawk brandishes an uncouth sabre

A bamboo flute blows out a cold wind, making my brother in the trade in military books even
more ambiguous

His murderously casual life a glance linking the present and the past, and so the hawk glides in the
air

Between the water and clouds bringing out a thread of light and dark
Allotting life and death to autumn, averaging it out, the same beauty and callousness

Like allocating bends to rivers, allocating the color red to the heart
Allotting plains to fields of vision, allotting the wind to a sloping arrow

But, it was I who saw the enemy in the sound of the flute
And the red in it sufficient for the reaping of life, and so the hawk rises
Like a kite rising up in a tower the string stay near the pale beauty and the clouds
Because the hawk is accustomed to distance

But, the fisherman in the clouds saw my brother caressed by a sea breeze in the conch's cafe
And so they live and die for each other but cannot meet, because they were originally one
He's the last robber to walk down from the mountain of the breast
He was lost in the shards of the empire, a thousand years he didn't return, and so the hawk swoops

One is called letters, one is called war, the pair of eyes opened in poems and books today still see
the horsebacks of mountain ranges stretching into innumerable centuries, into a hawk

#8

Content with partial sovereignty among the conch shells the dynasty forgets the rivers and lakes
On a strand beneath palm trees
Within dreams inside straw hats
The fortress of ants rings with the far-off sound of bells

The golden arrows of noonday sunlight directly strike the tiny capital
On the great road of the fight for power on the central plain the youth named Valiant leaps on his
horse and goes north

Secluded in naps royalty forget the war
On an island in a silkworm's cocoon
In the blue sky above a locust tree
The tail end of a formation of geese blows long-drawn-out horns

#9

Within labor and struggle learn the truth, lay out your cards, then move in
And this makes the man that you are, riding a horse galloping in front of merit and fame, a long
way off from class
Study, get sick and think wild thoughts
On the rosy horizon use tiger's teeth to ask to see the princess

The person walking at your side, outstrip inner being, lies also outstrip culture
Roll around in society, an evil cultural spirit, fairly false
Half words half man, both like calligraphy and like an old-time scholar
This is the horse-riding lover galloping out front of your marriage, but backward in thought
Plant melons reap melons, plant beans reap beans, the character "false" harms him throughout life

Somebody who doesn't study, is not a great master either
What goes from a store and mixes with fruit drops easily sweetening are star singers and
undertakings
Able to flow from your tears into a television series
This is also your mounted lover galloping out front of first love
He is your literacy teacher, the characters he writes bigger than walnuts smaller than trysts blacker
than hearts

This world, much culture, many reasons, so hermits have already vanished without a trace
The person who tallies with your heart, that certainly isn't you, but is sure to be very mixed up
He must take off the illiterate's cap, but not overdo it
And me, self-abusive and self-improving, I suppress a supra-class capacity to drink and the staying
power to love a woman
I want to join in the labor, walk the road up to the hills down to the country

#10

I can only enter into the vast world from inside a seed
I plead with solar terms and geomancy, plead with beans and medicinal herbs to introduce me into
the countryside
I beg the year's best sun to tan me into the eldest of peasants
I beg phones, trains, tractors to carry me to the commune
Let the smallest peas and radishes guide me there
Let the scrawniest blackest Ergui, Iron Lock, Young Whelp or other little brother
Lead me into the brigade foreman's home, to receive a second education

On South Mountain I plant trees, and on North Mountain I tend sheep draped in a padded cotton
jacket
In February, I knit tight brows observing the thawed river flow toward town
Flow toward the human crowd of academic inquiry and my friends
I stand on a precipitous rock observing the substance of spring plowing and the broad-chested open
country
In planting season, everything is beneath my notice
No culture also no law of the land
There's only a sky full of flying cotton, locusts and wheat awns passing over a lifetime's broadest
horizon

#11

I see a beautiful woman made up of learning working in the fields
With hands of minimal merit weaving the future into the commune
Studying, showing respect and strolling inside it
A gas lamp from the North illuminates the spectacle of philosophy and struggle
With the face in the water reservoir she guards rice seedlings in a pictorial
With lips on the tree-side kisses that industrious urban youth

This was once my wife
Through long black hair and scum she saw the road up to the mountains down to the country
Then went to temper herself in country customs and local dialects
Beside running water she joined the organization and was washed clean out from soapy water
Whose woman is this? In fruit she labors
After labor she's sweeter than fruit
Then I strained at my digging, through hard work I won her

#12

I see a beautiful woman brought forth from the side of a Chinese character wake up on a
component
Her right hand holds a sword her left picks a flower
With the pictographic part she chants poems makes rhymed prose
With the associative part she raises wind makes waves
An unprecedented beauty! Add a stroke below and she's a rose
Growing on a tree she's a prostitute
Pluck it and she's a maxim an epigram and the year's last crop
Ship it home and it's a character you can't write, finally becoming an eye-catching slogan for
banners and mouths

I have only to put her beside a brother he becomes a sister
I send her everywhere in world to catch monsters half-man half-character
But throw in a return letter and she becomes a wife, so
A change of components she's always an evil fairy, escaped deep in mountains old forests
opposing the world's beautiful women

Men like heroes of the past today become hermits or anti-heroes
So the city sends out three ugly men to beat her, they beat her so she changes back and forth
Finally she hides in a mountain cave eating beautiful men
This evil fairy that won't die! A beauty ingrained and extreme
Already cannot become a lady or a miss in reality
And leaves me unable to go back to the first character to read her

#13

Driving of the emperor becomes the final agricultural revolution
That year broad beans were not treated as broad beans
Barley also didn't act as barley, one portion became workers, the other revolutionaries
The people overthrew the emperor rectified the orientation of crops in the countryside
Knocking agriculture crooked to one side, dropping down from the dykes

We accidentally overturn the feast, substituting polite drinking with chaotic political games
On a ship the leader comes from southern seas to leader our outward appearance

Although we join in the revolution, the hearts of some are never healthy
Just this way I accidentally knock myself unsteady on my feet, I can only sit down to write poems
I'm locked up by language, a local dialect can drive me out of the ancestral land
Today I stand on the island of plain speech observing the fire on the opposite shore

In October, the agricultural calendar becomes Gregorian, time is advanced
In the year Xinhai (1911) the common folk drive the biggest peasant out of the grain
Lobbying takes the place of government from the opposite side, becoming nongovernment
And the Han language becomes a state of Qin I can't beat even when I try

#14

So, planted and low-lying enemy agents appear in my poems
These dammed things without emotional color, not in the service of a title
When they appeared, how much government silver they collect I have no idea
As soon as read and understood they exterminate conjunctions, bite open the poison in meaning
I've seen brief lyrics become traitors to the Han due to inexperience
I've also seen poems published by a military government by way of false surrender

But another group of courageous sentences gather themselves together, lead prepositions,
auxiliaries and other ferocious mercenaries
To open brigand's inns, loot homes, rob banks, smuggle and other heroic business
Or nouns and verbs run up the apricot-yellow flag, recruit deserters and traitors from each other
Overnight they dress in armour carry weapons, gag mouths and race off to attack the great master
Slobber and skin appear on the surface of characters, come to life on streets by way of sloppy
strokes
These knaves, garishly dressed, low IQs, what they intend to do I haven't the slightest
These valiant sentences together with barbarous peasants reap tornados on the horizon
Lyrical language is bent into a gentle slope, allowing women to sit
To forget their shame, and see a rainbow on the horizon and love outside marriage

But this ominous state of affairs is behind us
In the end the poet's talent suffers savage collections, trapping and murder
Then everything goes to the great master
And so, these dubious words, my lawless friends of meat and liquor
Tomorrow which restaurant, which brothel will we attend?

#15

The people get out of bed and dispose of the classical language
The teacher rides a horse into a sentence, bumps into two presidents in syntax and morphology
Learning inclines toward two workable possibilities, the political situation gets blurred
Like putting the words you say into history
Like writing directly on water, like a person living in seclusion

The empire with no domain still has an emperor opening city gates
The other world contained in a poem now sums up the person chanting poems
What I've won from fate is based precisely on this, days and months like a weaver's shuttle
I entered from outside the world, and now I'm faced with going out again

That sentence can't be explained with words, inside it the teacher runs in circles
Like fishing at the Peach Blossom spring, getting drunk again in drunkenness
Now I also ride a horse in, with this dream interpreting this dream
Within one dynasty assisting another

#16

In the days of liberation there's not enough road to walk
Because handing a part of history to generals is not the same as giving a peninsula to philosophy
We can hand a girl over to a captain, give a noose to a courtesan
But we can't give the Southland to language, we must discuss democracy and science
During the process of popularizing plain speech recommend some people first strike a bureaucratic
tone
Produce more guns for some people, more election ballots for others
Like this the facial skin of the people can be thickened and used in place of the Great Wall

The emperor has already abdicated
Ashamedly we clip our queues
We shave our heads bald establish governments in every province

In days of liberation, we start to study new culture
In everyplace amid the flames of war we march north and study abroad
A night of autumn wind brings idealistic thoughts, blows ripeness into grain and lovers
So, even though we can't clearly see the revolution's essence
It's still not the same as a hero clearly seeing the road he came on

#17

That side of the sea is the tail-end
That's the south Caribbean, the place I want to go to sleep!
When my ears prick up on the sea
I hear the sighs of sailors two years old, a mail steamer
Still at least one thousand leagues from a marine disaster

I hear stars in the water make love and sigh
Like on that remote night during summer vacation
The moon climbs into my book bag and quietly writes
Also the star of the Wolf of Heaven's navigation light, luring granddad's warships to sail in and out
In another year, in China on a Yangtse river dock, a passenger boat leaving port
Once infinitely extended a youth's dreamland

Today, the mail steamer comes to a halt, sadly performing its task in time
Searches for the sinking point on the compass, then silently sinks
Trades winds once violently blew, blowing white sails toward childhood
Blowing hearts back to homelands, blowing February
Back to genial St. Lucia
I don't know how far it is to the Caribbean Sea
But I believe the world's coral, lighthouses, newspapers and disasters at sea
I once stood at the side of a ship, saw the distance of those two year's travel between that stretch of
sea and my soul
Inserted after a part-hidden part-visible romantic tale
Being slowly rolled up into my pupils by an overturning whale

#18

Along the valley of clouds there's a path leading to granddad's house
All along the path, my fate was prolonged and lent out to others
And because of this a woman's green spring was shortened
Her life
was only enough to use for one tryst
The sound of her is now carried over for the last time

In that steaming homeland, in the fishing village glinting in the study
What I lend to others is my nature and experience
Is pearls of tears hanging high on tree branches and a rifle hung aslant on the back of a horse

I lent my fate to someone else, one morning I open a map
Dissolve the nation, and using an albatross
Scroll the south up toward the north, then tell him the way to live
I remind him to fly up onto the horse
And to realize death twice
Once it's love once, of course, hate

And between these two
I sit under a big tree, remembering a unbridled green spring
Just as the dazzling noontime sunlight arrives
Out on the gulf, the albatross sows the pollen of seagulls
Savagely a clock moves
A mushroom attentively listens to the sound of a mill facing onto the gulf
And on the sea
I see a huge cloud inhaling the days up into a blue sky