

The Poetry of Meng Lang 孟浪

Selections: 1983-1995

Meng Lang was born in 1961 in Shanghai. From the early 1980s, Meng was very active in the publication and editing some of Shanghai's major unofficial poetry journals, such as *On the Sea* 海上 and *Continent* 大陆. From 1981 until 1985, Meng also edited his own small poetry journal under the title *MN*. In 1986-1988, Meng was living in Shenzhen where he assisted Xu Jingya in editing the "Grand Poetry Exhibition", published in October 1986 in the *Shenzhen Youth Daily* and *The Poetry Press*, and the resultant book, published in Shanghai in 1988. Later, in 1995, after increasing difficulties with the police, Meng was able to emigrate to the USA, where he continues to write poetry.

- 1) **An Unemployed Worker Wanders the Boulevard** [失业工人游逛大街]
- 2) **Get a Cure** [劝医]
- 3) **A Sanatorium on the Spanish Coast** [西班牙海滨的疗养所]
- 4) **A Fixed Address** [定居]
- 5) **Bare-Armed Men in a Village** [村里光膀的男人]
- 6) **A Fish that Crossed a Bridge** [过桥的鱼]
- 7) **Winter** [冬天]
- 8) **The Elevator Revolution** [电梯革命]
- 9) **01:28 Still Alive** [01:28 还活着]
- 10) **The True Color of Iron** [铁的本色]
- 11) **A Mystical Experience** [神秘经验]
- 12) **An Image** [图像]
- 13) **A Graveyard for the Vocabulary** [语言公墓]
- 14) **A Stage-prop Gun** [道具枪]
- 15) **Don't Let the Grief Out** [不放走悲痛]
- 16) **A Life in This Century** [本世纪的一个生者]
- 17) **The World** [世界]
- 18) **Death of a Married Woman** [一个妇人的死]
- 19) **A Gunman of the Industrial Age** [工人时代的枪手]
- 20) **A Sequence of April Poems** [四月的一组]
- 21) **Running from April Toward May** [从四月奔向五月]
- 22) **Notes on a Winter Season** [冬季随笔]
- 23) **A Millennium** [千年]
- 24) **As if just Waking from a Dream of China** [如梦中国初醒时]
- 25) **The Gas Lamp in History** [历史上的汽灯]
- 26) **No Way to Finish It** [无法结束]
- 27) **Power Takes a Beating** [力量遭受击打]
- 28) **Let's Face up to a Nation's Other Face** [让我们面对一个国家的反面]
- 29) **This Sort of Child** [这样一位孩子]

- 30) **The Structure of Mankind** [人类的结构]
- 31) **Private Notations: The Extermination Of An Era** [私人笔记：一个时代的消灭]
- 32) **A Well Brought-up Accountant** [有教养的会计员]
- 33) **O Lofty Autumn, a Patch of Your Face is Blurred** [高原的秋天呵，你的脸模糊一片]
- 34) **A Pioneer** [一个先驱]
- 35) **On the Canopy of Heaven the Heavy Rain Bends** [大雨在天幕上弯曲]
- 36) **She Runs Rapidly Back to Girlhood** [谈迅速奔回了少女时代]
- 37) **A Terrorist** [恐怖分子]
- 38) **Story of a Dream** [梦的故事]
- 39) **A Passport to Travel** [旅行护照]

An Unemployed Worker Wanders the Boulevard [失业工人游逛大街]

A cover girl stares deep seated into your feelings
Turns out that there are deep and shallow ones

There are thick and thin popular magazines
the prices cheap or dear
if I weigh them in my hand
the cover girl will jump heedlessly to the ground
kick up her heels, take off

And now no substitute offers
to fill the vast blank space on the cover
you turn the cover
inside, brave fish are stranded belly up in the shallows
dead glazed stares

Later you lay down the magazine
think of the next boss you'll see
the inevitable smiling face
of the fathomless deep

Get a Cure [劝医]

In a jungle guerrillas and government troops trade fire
but malaria assaults both
no friends no foes.

You hope to find work in the capital.

Have you seen Latin-American-style disappearances
weren't you told to read today's evening paper
the lead item reports this quarter's fourteenth
case of a disappeared girl.

No.

I'll tell you what it is to disappear
it's a bloodless murder.

At the twenty-nine kilometer mark on the Number Three suburban highway
in open land four hundred meters away on the left
twenty-two nameless bodies were unearthed
all young men.

Their craniums all mercilessly smashed with blunt objects.

No gun reports
no sound!

What can you still hope for here.

The last five surviving guerrillas
crossed the border long ago.
And a mountain brigade major accompanied by his wife
will come to have you treat a gun wound to the face.

A Sanatorium on the Spanish Coast [西班牙海滨的疗养所]

Here chairs are full of expectations
two chairs facing each other
or two chairs aligned

You walk up close
and all say the chairs are empty
you walk up and immediately walk away

Later the chairs develop a terrible itch
grow moss
and also strike the pose
of the arthritic

You come with your legs
and leave with them
if you're not careful hip bones will slip their sockets
the chairs' hopes come to nothing, inevitably
no one cares

When you
finally stuff legs into the long pockets of your trousers
inch by inch
the uprising
earth buries the chairs

Ruthlessness also has its own meter
there's no lighthouse on the island's barrier reef
only a candle stick

A Fixed Address [定居]

You've experienced failure
defeat of the flesh
your bones are completely exposed

Day by day
the traveler's toothbrush
exhibits his mortality

The whole point
has to do with the defeat of flowers
and an air crash

A surge of immigrants toward another island
see the defeated fish
sink into the carcass of the plane

Dinosaurs experienced defeat before you
at this moment in cities
it creeps up on the crowds

Bare-Armed Men in a Village [村里光膀的男人]

Just as the crest of the flood's due to arrive
the sound of clothes pounding is as thick as a cloudburst

But our arms are bare, our hands
have desires

Hands that once were drying rough garments in a river bed that was hatching black pebbles
that once embroidered pairs of phoenixes on the coarse bodices of the garments

Flee the unending disaster:

But our arms are bare, our hands
hang near death

As the crest of the flood arrives
the women pounding the clothes float into view, midriffs bare
draped in beautiful hair
goddesses of the wash striding slow toward distant mountains

The flood's close to us now

A Fish that Crossed a Bridge [过桥的鱼]

Used to an unconventional life
this fish has a greater desire to swim leisurely over the bridge
from this bank to that

When we lower our heads we see the river under the bridge
her figure
of flowing water glitters and trembles, sobs

It's not in darkness

Together, with this fish, passing over the top of the bridge
we decent people are
off to do serious business
moving from this bank toward that

The bridge's shadow tosses in the undulations of the river
now it's empty of people
now we've dropped behind the fish
and watch him swim gracefully deep into the earth

Winter [冬天]

The poem points toward itself
I throw on a coat
and pass through an empty land
disappearing in a city. A bronze,
I can't get a foot in
the poem points to the inner being
four snow-white walls
someone could live in this empty room

On the other hand. Together let's pass through
this lot of unoccupied land pass through
this city pass through
the poem itself

We can also live there
raise a fire, strip off overcoats
even underwear
reveal ourselves. Face up to the poem
or depart from it.

The Elevator Revolution [电梯革命]

Plotting to go on living
they converse casually with the dead

From this stretch of dirt the dead
prop up their bodies
wanting a cigarette
tossing black hair
that hasn't left the tops of their heads

The hats grieve
pushed into the pit of their stomachs
they emit lamentations
Soon after, talk of life with the dead
new lodgers
plot
in upstairs rooms

How to go on living

Remains in ashtrays
pile high and higher
they call the lodgers downstairs
to sit on a sofa
and sink into it together

01:28 Still Alive [01:28 还活着]

These live faces overripe faces
these fruits grow overhead
nobody can eat anybody else
again and again they eye one another

These faces make a great show of living
but I live in complete embarrassment
a twist of my head
and it drops off

Now the faces won't see
my whereabouts
again and again the faces eye each other
no one else drops off

These fruits are a beautiful eyeful
jam is like a violence done by the fruit
these faces preserve a final bouquet of dignity
the fruits make a great show of growing on the same tree

The True Color of Iron [铁的本色] Shenzhen, Nov. 12, 1987

Feminine fingers brush through the iron of the old year.
Brush out your eyebrows with black paint
they won't flake or rust for ten years.

Seeing the true color of iron
a man in his maturity
bypasses the bowl of clear water

The iron in my hair
the iron in my blood
makes me enter the oxygen of your life

A sharp razor blade
is impressed on
the back of my hand. Your lips
refuse red paint.

A Mystical Experience [神秘经验] Shenzhen, Nov. 16, 1987

You could die for the first installment
Here I insert
a door.
Its lonely guard
has finished reading the first installment.

You could die for the door
inside it there is the second installment
on the table.
The lonely guard has relaxed his hand
I am reading

You could die for the second installment
I've opened the door
and finally join the two together.
The guard is faced with the third installment
and I'm in the process of inserting a newcomer

They could die for a blank sheet of paper.
This is the final installment, this is the back of the door

An Image [图像] Shenzhen, Nov. 22, 1987

The ballistic me, smooth, graceful
gone without a trace

From under her hairpin
the woman you're incapable of loving pulls a gun
your right kneecap
will take the mild blow.

Half the city's
bright, clean domes are lifted away.

And then the toxic me
complicated, profound
seeps into the city
flows over every street possible.

Behind a transparent cup
the woman's in a sleep from which she won't wake.

Dragging the injured leg
you head toward a blood bank that doesn't exist.

A Graveyard for the Vocabulary [语言公墓] Changsha, March 20, 1989

Words are horribly silent
the speaker covers his mouth,
already hurt.

Complete sentences are everywhere
Whole meanings
that no one expresses,
the speaker puts up with.

Everywhere the meaningless
rumbling of wheels
a succession of passengers stable
words in bodies
and the speaker dashes up to inspect the wounds.

He's on the road of human hubbub
he's at the graveyard for words.

A Stage-prop Gun [道具枪] Shanghai, Sept. 24, 1989

Measure how long a concert lasts with a rifle
wrong notes everywhere
the polite audience's too late to miss them.

The concert's a blanket of silence
covertly more people are listening in
to the tremble of strings
because it is likely the performers will quickly go under cover.

The fake ears I take to the concert
are probably the earphones of happiness
 happiness' earmuffs
 ear-plug.
Truer sounds cease under guard.
On all sides gunfire rises.

Don't Let the Grief Out [不放走悲痛] Shanghai, Oct. 11, 1989

I often come out of my body, and breathe there far away
my heartbeat still all around me
the most stirring thing is to carelessly
make myself rise up.

A rag or two of strange clothing
filled by the wind, I'm blown breathless
From all directions more people reach out to touch me
asking each other: What miracle's this?

Already, in the intangible, I've lost my form
as if my soul faces the crowd, so closely
it has almost lost any distance between
Everyone is covering the pit of their stomach, and won't let the grief out.

A Life in This Century [本世纪的一个生者]

Learn to breathe fake air
and then to speak
true words

At this time I write poetry
spread lies
those who live in this building
are all my closest friends
a pity I don't know any of them

My heart is full of enemies

Pull a revolver out from under
a heart specialist's pillow
I'm really going to die
in the fake air

Surviving enemies
flee to the rear
slipping into a girl's middle school
a counterfeit teacher's teaching
battlefield first-aid

First you must learn how to live quietly
in the fake air
when not writing poetry
I bind up the false casualties

Casualties everywhere
make their wounds true

Simultaneously they with me are delivered
to a red-cross hospital
the first treatment is very perfunctory
I quit writing for life

The World [世界]

If your hand relaxes, the world will collapse in front of you
you must grip it hard by the collar
you must treat it as a person too
yearning to share their blood

You must find its cut
you must undo its underclothes
you must be allowed a free hand

Actually you have only this one chance to save it
over all these years, the world lay comatose on your shoulder
just for this once

Death of a Married Woman [一个妇人的死]

Sewing scissors
manufacture virtue. The death of a married woman
falls at your feet

I stride over
the corpse. Over the virtue
want to sweep the room clean
and live there afresh
odor-full of a living person

I've gone beyond virtue. The sunlight is radiant
the apparition of a woman
lets out extraordinary colors in the corner

Wearing clothing made by a married woman. During the whole process
the scissors
were stuck in my heart
no one will come to pick them up again

A Gunman of the Industrial Age [工人时代的枪手]

A trigger's stuck to my index finger
a danger to others to oneself
it's always so considerate

If the gun's all one piece
if the hand's all there
and consciousness intact
these items won't lack for hatred

Don't go imagining things,
what should point to the sky today
is chimneys
but then how does one account for
the cannon

Don't lean too heavy on the imagination
but the butt between your fingers
already won't be stubbed out
nor can it be thrown away

A Sequence of April Poems [四月的一组] Shanghai, April 1990

1.

The original stance
like the killer's is already over
what appears evasive still continues.

But the original stances
of deception and murder
are enjoyed forever by a prominent bandit

2.

His words touch on the crux of it
truth is outspoken
like the fresh blood that flows from a wound

A mouth is battered
the truth is spoken.

3.

A trip of a thousand miles
a lover's arms aren't what's retrieved

Damage to human nature
during the movement's hasty steps
I can't move at all

4.

Who's the violent criminal?

During the recrimination
those sitting upright are indistinguishable
the rights and wrongs or sitting upright are vague

Whoever's the violent criminal
he's the sougning of fallen trees
when the wind rises again metal's fully exposed

5.

The original stance

was one of speaking, so difficult
was the walking stance, on the way to losing it
I abandon all stances

Running from April Toward May [从四月奔向五月] Shenzhen, May 1990

1.

Hold back the sweet hot blood
hold back the startled high-strung horses of life
and the unstoppable wild grasslands too

With hands I cover the aching pit of my stomach
cover the huge unseen sore
and sigh over my depleted capacity to run

2.

In this anguish, my last steps –
still incapable of deceiving the dirt

My last steps
have no imagination
and tread the great dry track

A high-strung horse gallops out from our palms

3.

Sacredly a cigarette burns
it will also reach the last stretch

I search for the finish, endless conclusion
an end from which there is no coming back

The wild horse of life vanishes in my wearisome maneuvers

Notes on a Winter Season [冬季随笔] Shanghai, Nov. 1990

1.

Because of my shouts the sky goes hoarse
and no one can hear the thunder

Because of the sky's shouts I go hoarse
my breath gets lighter and lighter

After me who will do the yelling?

In the sky there are only the tracks drawn by the wings of birds
only the sobs of birds
swallowed by me, my face averted

2.

The snow falls straight onto the dust
the dust falls straight into the heart
my heart, falls straight
into a place where you wouldn't believe it could go.

3.

A heavy snow calmly and peacefully
is dissolving the iron in the firearms
in regimental order an army enters the cemetery and is given immortality.

The heavy snow calmly and peacefully
leaves you unable to catch even a glimpse of the sky
and, me, to shout

One by one my heart beats
at the grave stones of the blameless dead
my heart, wanting to wake the whole cemetery or the world

4.

The voice goes hoarse
the sky takes up the shout

Thunder is the sound of the sky snoring
let it sleep soundly too

But thunder is the sky snoring
the sky is unwearying:

Team down, all winter
let the cries in the sky be transformed into a blizzard of crows!

A Millennium [千年] Shanghai, June 1991

1.

Plot after plot of full, mature crops surge toward a hunger
the tip of that tide wets my tongue

How bashful you are in the dark, political acts

2.

Keep up with me, together we'll correct the mistake that confronts us
use our entire bodies to blot it out

We've covered up the facts
so, we win universal affirmation --
among the powerful peasants we're surely the pits

3.

A mosquito poises over the world smelting iron
or playing a piano

In whose mind is the error magnified once more

An old mosquito throws itself at politics
in the face of the nation
runs into a wall
and under the skin and the time
the thick blood vessels of the peasants are unforthcoming

4.

Keep up with me, together we'll correct the error that confronts
use our entire bodies to blot it out

No! Use our own fresh blood
scour all scum off our body

As it reaps, the powerful peasant's hand
miscues and chops into his own self

5.

The harvests roll down from their summit

and weigh down on my shoulders too
like a crow, hunger takes off from my body
bearing his wound the powerful peasant confronts the politics of it

O, my tongue's soaked in a bitterness that's been brewing for a millennium

As if just Waking from a Dream of China [如梦中国初醒时]
(A sequence of 6 poems; Shanghai, Nov. 1991)

#1

The drowsiness at noon is also vague, my fierce tiger
devours me, till the sunset's fearsome afterglow spills across the sky
I won't say if it isn't my blood what could it be

Rumbling over the street the carcass of a race has just been dragged away
together the uneaten limbs exert themselves
the shadow of the tiger falls genteelly into the darkness of my embrace

Overnight the hair of the people who've lost their second names grows thick
helplessly they face east and welcome the lonely sunrise
during her morning toilette a drop of nameless blood is smeared on a woman's lips

The scenery in the city, its people and its systems, is full of murderous intent
one whole human heart encompasses a bright tiger skin
at noon, while the world is still on the verge of losing me

#2

Honor is evoked from out of the blood, extracted
I see fresh flowers. And then brutality

This is the tradition, a range of mountains
unfamiliar to me, a young motorcyclist rides between true and false

For later smouldering generations women enter the struggle
the setting of that sun is concealed in the invisibly wounded heart

In an embrace the west wind raids the vacant seats of disease
I approach an order, also, decline

Honor evoked from out of the blood, extracted
slowly a star settles anchored to the tattooed
arm of the motorcyclist

#3

He'll only make the sacrifice for a lofty goal
a not necessarily bad notion tortures him
he peers about at the popular arts world, he's flipped through the prevailing atmosphere
I probably struggle in vain for a lofty purpose too

He'll make the sacrifice for a sublime purpose
a not necessarily bad result awaits him
he looks to the sky and sighs, disregarding the atmosphere entirely
for a lofty purpose I was once an exemplar
for a sublime goal, he is he

I am me

in this atmosphere, all are in search of each other
I look at me, I look at him, suddenly there's a direction

#4

A beast in a forest of white bones shuttles back and forth
head raised or lowered it can't free the hunger from its belly
a cruel reality: it can't run the course of mankind's mangled road

A beast is not a human being. How can it understand
I'm above it, listening respectfully to the desolate gospel issued forth from above me
let the beast pass, let its white bones reappear on the path through a lifetime

#5

A barren unpeopled wilderness
everywhere a tension towers aloft

An invisible carriage hidden in the distant past
rumbles close

The reinsman merely dips his head and flips the page gently
a great wind sweeps people up, makes them stand

You must find the shoe that came off when it was crushed
and the ripped-off empty sleeve

A barren unpeopled wilderness
your teeth fall out here and there, and slowly take root

#6

Several startling errors are contained between this earth and sky
but I pull away from the mantle of earth, and see my red heart

In this atmosphere, everybody's heart can't be avoided
the final blow it deals. The chance for correction it gives, or doesn't

The chance to grow makes himself the error itself
makes me secrete unexpected wounds, the earth is flat and unaffected

This is far from a crime, far from an escape into the air
error treads on the head of error, man's life can't find its way back to the starting block

The inevitable finish that rushes toward us, the crust of the swelling earth
I leap across too, like a great volcano with great mouthfuls I clear out a basin full of blood

The Gas Lamp in History [历史上的汽灯] Oct. 20, 1992

A torch out of Tibet
an arm burning straight
receives treatment in an army hospital farther on

He's sick, an arm's festering
the arm's sawn off altogether by an army doctor

The torch sends out its last lick of flame
the infantry hospital gradually darkens
a silent tent erected there
lights up its fresh red heart
a pale open gas lamp under the light

No Way to Finish It [无法结束] Oct. 30, 1992

A lovely country ruled by illusions
a traveller from another land places his complete credence in fate
a valise of scenery, a bag of embryos
weighed at customs, stamped
the citizen weight -- short
gladness, twinkles in the colorful drawing of a starry sky
an army surges out of barracks, and drinks green beer
in one woman's dream the king of the country is killed
a surplus of sorrow runs over the boulevards
guiltily a locomotive peels off or hauls on its black smoke

Power Takes a Beating [力量遭受击打] Nov. 8, 1992

Wrapped in women's kerchiefs with large-bird prints
fiercely the mob flocks after the world's velocity
they don't say they're fugitives

Standing in front of a target that appears to be a sick friend far away
time after time they're pulled asunder by the sheer distance of the world
distance, distance, phases of emotion such as these
they acknowledge as their goal

For the last time they pound power in strenuously
unable to escape, the kerchiefs rise up lamely
Hey, they acknowledge they're fugitives
and so finally fix the road signs and the world passes them by

This mob will be haunted by the road
they'll have to take their kerchiefs off on bare ground
no choice, they'll follow the great birds' struggle to fly free of the sky

Let's Face up to a Nation's Other Face [让我们面对一个国家的反面] Nov. 26, 1992

Let us face up to the other face of the nation
let's turn over the literacy cards
the railroad turns into a narrow winding path
like burial mounds overgrown by weeds: coal

The other face of a nation, the children finally know!

(It can't be seen, nothing is there to see.)

Let's face up to a nation's darkness
let's light the oil lamp
the railroad, it's already arrived in the past
coal, because of coal, miners never come back up to the world of man
a nation's darkness, embryos can feel it better!

(It can't be seen, nothing is there to see.)

This Sort of Child [这样一位孩子]

Even if despair arrives
this sort of a child still has expectations
at this kind of a time
this child is even more helpless in a commune of ten thousand jostling heads.

This sort of a child
saw the locomotive of frantic times burst out of the commune
in the commune a mother suckles another babe
at this kind of a time
this child heard his own cries
and in a flash was in the wild, maturing, growing quickly.

Even if despair arrives
this sort of a child doesn't dodge it
at this kind of a time
this commune is all of man's despair
the laborer's back is bent under the weight of the fruit in his quota
alone under the sky this child offers up his young face with both hands.

The Structure of Mankind [人类的结构]

On the front-line under fire
a professor's pulled into the bunker
he passes out in the laboratory
two white mice have a greater will to face misfortune on mankind's behalf.

Three rifles propped up together
three soldiers face the nation's test tubes and flasks
three mothers pull a clothesline in three different directions
one end fixed to the three rifles.

Under fire on the frontline
a professor is sent back out
he takes a bullet in the laboratory
the two white mice see it more clearly than the three students.

Three rifles propped against each other
three soldiers going up in smoke and the tranquility of mankind
three mothers think of three sons at the same instant
today the bonfires of their days as students are baking three pairs of flowery swimming trunks.

Private Notations: The Extermination Of An Era [私人笔记：一个时代的消灭]

Selections from a poetry sequence (of 62 poems)

Written January-September 1988 in Changsha

Revised and transcribed in Shenzhen, August 17-18, 1989

#2

The fruit within the sweet knowledge
is chided, like a gardener
those vanities, but still needing
to be grafted onto a bronze plate
no water, no passion
the fruit pits at the center of my endless palm burst out
clothes stripped off, time misspent
fruit like bullets, on a train
transported in an orderly fashion to the front!

In a dance of common folk a seething excitement of limbs
stills the nearby water, freezes
my already-foreseen future
but the unknowable past
follows the limbs of reality butting in
and a gun shoots it away
I've been built into a dam
the dance on the dam
waters the people I ardently love
separating the two gently
peaceably, also constructively
the unwitting blades of a bayonet

#27

Historical woman
stands facing me!

My face's icy bright flame
disappears like gold
I show my sick face to you!

I've been cut back
inside a speeding train
from engine to caboose!

I stop the glass
departing from all containers of meaning!

In places where earth is a foil to me
I must serve as a foil for earth
a tiny dot, black
look into the distance, a falling fish!

All in one piece a swan still has a place to be alone
what you don't see doesn't belong to you!

The broken hand lies, doubtless, on the ground!

The wind blows itself toward the finish
no more a literary symbol, literature's
bird is motionless in midair
taking on the errands of these urges!

#28

In the city televisions with no legs
climb with deep emotion to the top of their antennas
then fly off toward the TV station
This isn't a dream of my golden hours!

Malignant TV benign TV
the television of mankind goes into a tumor
in my life
waiting to appear, awaiting
the cruelest eyes of children!

#49

The fire is blacker than me, you dare not come closer
It's the darkness of the spirit, let me
dodge the spirit's flames
I cannot cheer up, this
planet turns awkwardly, makes me hang on
here innocent!

#60

Do you still think of spiritually exterminating me? Do you still think
of saving me corporeally
it's my own responsibility
to use the scalpel, to lie down on the operating table
two people with a stretcher
leave my body in a front-line trench
the age-old war, today
occurs in the pit of your stomach!

Violent coughing, severe shaking
your soul in your hand
to be presented to whom, like a gun
the barrel droops limply down
toward me, completing the motions of metals and high grade
non-metals, the gun that soundlessly leaves
no trace, makes a ruthless sound
a white coat is shaken down over the hospital!

#62

The thousand-year-old man who died young is full of contradictions
sleeps soundly in a twenty-seven-year-old breast, who died young
is his youngest son, in a war
splashing into the unfinished innards of a bomb
the blossom goes up in the air withering
I am the rational tardy honey bee
I smell immortality
nonchalantly, he moves
so feebly, so's the heart still beats
in my breast, harmony, tranquility
it can send you to sleep!

The man who chooses an odd world, chose
an odd vocabulary, not growing into a fish
to wade across this shallow sea, affirms
similarly an odd diver's lonely existence, his fingers rove
he's in a higher place, language
pushes the window beyond his grasp, into the distance
the sounds of moving joints startle him awake, also a keen axe
a higher existence too
his followers are flooding everywhere
but the words don't arrive at their meaning!

A Well Brought-up Accountant [有教养的会计员]

The hand
that felt safe on the pure white tablecloth
is suddenly yanked away from the tabletop
the tablecloth oozes out
a pianist's severed fingers.

A night like sapphire passed through there
and left a doubtful odor of perfume.

Her back to me
the accountant takes inventory of her fingers.

I put the tablecloth away
remove the dinner table too
under the light the ruthless floor reveals
the corpse of a piano
suspended high above the accountant's fingers.

The pianist borrows my hands
to touch all the files
Before we ate
the accountant deliberately knocked over
a bottle of perfume
no motive for homicide was contained in this.

O Lofty Autumn, a Patch of Your Face is Blurred [高原的秋天呵，你的脸模糊一片]

Autumn, leaning
wearily against my door frame is
sunlight probably angling westward.

Who rings my doorbell at noon?
Nobody.

O lofty autumn, your grieving face is in a far-off place.

My neighbor moves soundlessly in his house
sees the blood of sages slowly flow out of midair
the blue ceiling appears to hold its breath.

I halt my steps.
I hear the sounds of furniture capsizing
the sound of a person falling heavily on the floor.

Again the doorbell sounds, I open the door: nobody.

Autumn, west-angling sunlight's innumerable thin long arms
droop down from the roof of my neighbor's home.

My neighbor, the offspring of a sage
just now becomes a bust in the empty space in front of his house
on the fertile earth a wreath has already withered.

I cry
O lofty autumn, a patch of your face is blurred.

A Pioneer [一个先驱]

On foot on the earth
between people
talked of
said to have fallen from space.

Footprints spread all over the place.

A branch
of blood determined to go it alone
goes quietly back to the crowd.

In a dark place, a deep place
giant rocks rumble.

The sound so familiar
wind wraps it up tight.

On the Canopy of Heaven the Heavy Rain Bends [大雨在天幕上弯曲] July 1993

On the canopy of heaven the heavy rain bends
like shoulders loaded down with stones
Ho, a palace in midair, a lofty load of white bones.

The wind blows urgently
this era's backward moving progress
the truth or fiction no one tests
a shin bone hangs high on the horizon
big raindrops suspended above, pour their hearts out to each other.

But the nation has already knuckled under to crude desires
impoverished soldier, use a match stick
to darken the pure water
Fish, none dare spit bubbles:

And in the rain finally somebody
afraid of fearlessness, ashamed of shamelessness

She Runs Rapidly Back to Girlhood [谈迅速奔回了少女时代] October 1993

A city cleaned out for a time by money
a musical fountain, nerves shot, disheveled hair dirty face.

The gardeners chase their female colleague
eventually a dozen big clippers cut off the straw maiden's pigtail.

Facing the once splendid fountain in the center of the street
an old lady crying, the water falls miserably.

She runs rapidly back to the brief bloom of her girlhood
in a mown wheatfield a golden-haired youth slowly rises.

Police indifferently direct this epoch's car backing up
white gloves stained by the blood of that exemplar (Lei Feng).

O a crowd of student's hearts, bitterly mourn what is yet to be
a poem, dares to freeze the murderous air of the whole era.

A Terrorist [恐怖分子] Jan. - March 1995

The mouth of an odd man
vomits up his innards
abacus beads and a ball of string too
after the vomiting's done, he straightens
says "My spirit's refreshed for it."

O, he's a militant
ceaselessly fasting, resisting
for him accountants turn the calendar
for him tailors open trunks of clothes --
a black cape in the crayon drawing on the month's card:

Today it's the fashions of marvelous women
the odd man, he's naked, eyes closed in repose
"I must think it through, 'the cosmos'
is precisely the piece of underwear that shames me!"

Story of a Dream [梦的故事] Jan.-March 1995

The poet attacks nothingness
with his body
this weapon, tonight wanders the street

Nanjing Road, a stretch of dead silence
as if in battle's aftermath, as if even farther
food drifts after the parachutes

Iron once burnt red-hot by a factory
both cold and black, reveals a fearsome wound
a dream is growing crooked, transforming swords into plows

A contingent of peasants disappears down Tibet Road
on the surface of Liqing Lake there are no footprints
they are merely fortunate reflections

The poet attacks nothingness
gradually he comes to
his fists relax, the cracks between his fingers stuck full of stars

A Passport to Travel [旅行护照] Jan.-March 1995

In a long-range view, China vanishes!

People rush around confused
the frightening news is broadcast everywhere
they say they'd rather be myopic! Short-sighted!

So, wearing glasses read a newspaper
the paper printed properly
a map of China --
mountains, rivers, open country, roads
cities, townships, villages too
all furiously writhing
bulging up out from the paper:

"China has not disappeared!
China has not disappeared!"

The map screeches
a wind rises
blows it from the hands of the newspaper reader
rolling like a piece of wastepaper
it travels all over China.

In the long-range view, a piece of wastepaper takes leave of China!