

# The Poetry of Wan Xia 万夏

Selections: 1984-1992

Wan Xia was born in 1962 in Chongqing, Sichuan province. Wan began writing poetry at university in Nanchong, where early in 1984, together with Chengdu's Hu Dong and his schoolmate Li Yawei, he formed the Macho Man 莽汉 group of poets. Despite moving on to a different poetical style a few months later, Wan edited an unofficial journal for the group late in 1984 and then had a hand in editing a series of other influential journals during the rest of the 1980s (*Modernists Federation 现代诗内部交流资料*, *Chinese Contemporary Experimental Poetry 中国当代实验诗歌*, both 1985; and *Han Poetry 汉诗*, 1986 and 1988). In early 1990, however, Wan acted as 'producer' of a video based on Liao Yiwu's poem <Requiem Mass> — for the victims of June Fourth — and was subsequently detained without charge for two years in a Chongqing prison. Upon release, Wan moved into the culture business, where he has done very well for himself and others (such as Li Yawei who initially worked with him), and has written little poetry since. In 1993, with his first profits, he edited and arranged the publication of the *Collected Post-Misty Poems: A Chronicle of Chinese Modern Poetry 中国现代诗编年史：后朦胧诗全集* in two volumes.

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**The Date [约会] 31/01/1984**

Knock before you enter  
respect for her is of the utmost importance  
when you see her nose mouth and other organs  
fully plugged by tubes bottles or a cork  
don't be hugely shocked by small things  
don't ask  
what is wrong  
you must put on a nonchalant air  
and absolutely must not compare the former wife to the present

Quickly find a chair and sit tight by her side  
allay all sense of urgency you don't want breathing difficulties  
by all means don't be rough  
when talking, try to look into her eyes  
make her feel you're sincere  
given a chance, massage some major pressure points  
intimate expression can convey another kind of language

When love is at its fiery point  
it benefits a patient body and soul  
so visiting times are best not too long  
normally best between ten to twenty days  
once before sleep  
three tablets a go washed down with tepid boiled water

A lot of optimistic talk is a stimulus  
and, as usual, cordially shake hands

Life [生活] 22/02/1984

We are all smelly socks on the feet of Confucius  
the money Mummy earns by her sweat and blood  
mud that can never be washed away on your feet  
and the shadow on your brow black as coal  
yet I still want to live a decent life  
however on my buttocks  
the enraged palm prints of my father still remain  
as red as my face  
but I still want to live a serious life be a serious person  
make out like a proper mensch

The Patria wants me to carry a knife  
to hack open enemy chests from the front  
my wife wants me to close my eyes  
to guess what kind of thing the world is  
and my compatriots  
fully enjoy the victory of women  
then again thump their bottoms  
curse them as prickly leaves

Anyway this is the way of the world  
just this kind of a regular pair of smelly socks  
or not smelly socks or whatever  
anyhow whatever I say doesn't count who am I anyway

But I remember the sea maid's sheep were all eaten by the Japs  
on the mountain slope all that remained were those blooming black flowers and plants  
Aiee, the poor sea maid  
I remember before the auction the whale bravely beached itself  
remember our China's Confucius still has a bit of fame in the world  
has the arts of paper-making and printing  
a Great Wall yet to collapse  
and huge nuclear and hydrogen bombs  
anyway the world is like this so entrancing and pretty  
anyhow I want to go on living  
can't be obsessed with defining the meaning of life  
even if you run the danger of getting sick sneeze to your heart's content  
even if a few imprints of Mama's are added  
to the palm prints already on your ass

Selections from **Dream of a Recluse** [隐梦], a series of 6 poems

**The White Horse** [白马]

An imaginary white horse scatters its fragrant hooves in the wood  
her hair lays flat over the tail  
its whiteness leads to transparency

I wait for you to return stamping flowers  
as if walking far through your palace  
the white horse is the hand nearest your lips  
you go into the wood  
you are not a horse

Neither is it a woman that rolls up the curtains of the lattice window  
the bolt of bleeding silk is still fluttering by the water  
once you wake from a dream it will die in another  
in another dream  
white is not a lofty colour  
a white horse is not a woman with four nude limbs

Back to the air  
now the clip-clop of hooves fills the thick shade  
the fruit you imagine beneath a rainbow is sure to be boneless  
and how can the scattered faces not be your horses

## The Essential Dress of a Poet [一个诗人的基本服饰]

In the mountains breeding snakes and at the seaside cultivating apples  
eating pure grain and salt  
but all this will be discarded on an island  
allowing each head to fly off in mutual suspicion

In the mountains somebody has beheaded the sea-maiden's sheep  
draped in sheepskin he returns to the ancestral land  
from a tree he comes down to the side of a well  
in a stretch of tree leaves closing eyes that have lost their head

From now on the well is full of eyes  
the sky that can be seen is all fish and their backdrop  
beneath another type of background  
a man is balancing a woman  
causing the dress of a poet to surge toward this pose  
so losing alcohol and grain, losing the fish  
and finally the head

The last salt dries in the grain becoming alcohol  
apples are placed in the grain, in the wine it seems fish swim  
in the basic conception of a poet  
she gets drunk and cries  
and does not dream of apples and fish

## A Recent Death [新丧] 1986

On a rainy day you are sick in your room  
she died in the second month  
she died in a cluster of flowers  
amid farm work she put down the sickle, left the stone mill and beans  
moving north toward your yard  
the warmth of the second month mingled with the warmth of her skin  
slipping out of skin  
she and you are easily lost  
a stretch outside and in, all becomes landscape  
the second month has a good climate for burials  
yet you have your back to the south, enter an even deeper room and strip  
making your skin confront the air  
you are free of farm work, but harbour a disease  
wheat and beans all grow into another shape  
the whole day in your room you suffer from thought  
but she is long dead  
Her death was to the south  
under a tree she faced a busy season she bloomed on a day of falling petals  
in the room you hear the wind  
spread all around  
drifting clouds gather on trees and form the scales of fish  
the next day, again it rains  
all landscape rushes at you, passes through you, then slowly wanders away noon, your  
surroundings and climate clear and bright  
people arrive bearing news of death  
you lose her

The second month, you are extra careful with skin  
the days of the month vanish in a flash  
you reside in yourself, busy with the season  
in farm work deeply experiencing the lunar calendar, I won her  
wearing hemp, cutting grass, shelling peas, she was in all farm work  
she seeded in the third month, and in the fourth smashed porcelain jars  
I can't blame her  
nor will she be judged

You are sick in your house, closing up  
under a tree tying knots in grass, remember the day of the funeral  
you went behind her, sat with your back to her  
you are more like her  
she faced the mountain to the north, stripped to the waist in a fallow field you held a sickle  
and she faced south to the river

yet you caught a cold in a corridor, and leaning on a little bird, carried her away on your back  
planting wheat far away from water and dirt  
you murdered her

To the north and south are corridors, yours is the east  
her skin is buried under bamboo, sitting facing you  
chestnuts fall from between all this, in the yard forming a blizzard  
the second month is deeper, more dated, better buried  
you wrap your clothes tight, occupying skin and silk  
she scatters disappearing around you, further from you  
returning what you discarded, approaching you in the sober landscape  
forcing you to live more deeply in your self  
take hold of yourself through your disease  
on your own in the rain growing into the scene  
at this moment you are her  
you open a chestnut, or draw water from the well, and look at yourself  
again you win her  
but the days of your sickness are shedding petals  
in the spring every place reports a recent death  
but you don't delay the farming season

## The Other Woman [彼女]

My other woman, when will I be in the monologue of your heart  
the bronze vessels of many days have no water to fill them  
but again today you bathe, get close to me with water  
even the shape of my face shrinks into a hairstyle  
but your many moments of weeping  
have nothing to do with me

A day of anxiety over yesterday  
last night was so tranquil  
so you thought of dying, of growing into pure expression  
never again able to secretly hurt and feel abased  
but then to weep till today  
even I am uplifted

After, you appear beautiful beyond compare  
your morbid state transforms all waists into water sprites  
rainy days are now also dropping almonds  
your hand signals already used up but your argot is incessant  
as precise as an unvoiced pact  
as if again you slay me

A woman who wants to die is always sad and beautiful  
one nears the opposite shore but dare not directly look  
you are the inverted image of a cluster of words in a wine glass  
following your own design blossoming into flowers and monologues  
then causing cotton and silk to be filled by skin  
I have nowhere to look

## **Ballet [芭蕾]**

Whoever wins a pretty woman  
his heart is heaviest with grief  
in the past you were not mine, from now on also not  
tonight, just as before with your elder sister, you not yet seventeen  
the first time and the last time  
I merely possess a pile of empty words and music

The sky is extremely bright, we have all become adults  
each sister, going her own way, lodges beauty with a man  
who is in the mirror  
long ago her limbs fell into the water  
like a rare daydream of mine  
an ancient melody of the spring snow, all air and water

Again I remember some neglected things  
the more tree leaves there are, the more easily they are forgotten  
again the sun illuminates the two faces of a scene  
part the silk  
and your breasts are snowing  
a very cold dance in a plot  
one by one all dramas black out

## A Girl and a Horse [女孩和马]

Ride the horse and forget the sky grows dark  
the horse rider turns, peers behind the grove  
heartache requires secrecy  
or chooses the morning, and chilly weather

Riding a good horse you can go up into the sky  
trample birds under hoof  
like a horse, an entire winter unclothed  
and endlessly regret  
the time you could not gauge the time  
all day in the mountains roaming  
your carriage lost direction

What does a girl know  
fording a river on horseback, a whip lashing butterflies  
the bluest diamond is dark, that is where sound lives  
water burns more fiercely than flame  
when fording the river who cut your finger  
and who plucks your breastplate and puts in an incense burner  
the loftiest illusion is merely whipping a horse into a wild gallop, unbounded  
in a fatal fatigue thirsting for bitten fruit

A horse leaves you, maybe going to a far-off place to die  
you a girl  
face a land never approached by man, what can you say  
your shortcomings in ripeness are strikingly pretty  
like the snow-white teeth of a crowd of strangers  
the languages of different lands mysterious and deep  
you ride on a horse, watch them sing praise, seeing off a dead man  
a cypress branch in the mouth, crossing a lake  
as tranquil as a mirror, faces dissipate  
have considered defeat and death  
the unspeakable affairs of a life

Now you return again to its side, a body of sentiment  
the flowers and plants as thick as at first  
a girl is forever an error  
but the thing is still perfect  
all its life a horse says not a word  
still big and tall, correct  
you live high on horse back, but the horse leaves you  
a girl

your hand must still gather up silk  
wash hair with lake water, coiling it ever higher

## The Essential Garments of a Poet (Rewritten) [一个诗人的基本服饰]

In the mountains raise snakes, and at the seaside cultivate apples  
eat pure grain and salt  
but when you put on a silk smock  
a tray of fruit with skin in hand, standing beside a chair  
you will hear under the skin the sound of flowers blooming  
all this happens in a very high very perilous place  
there, even higher heads are all lopped off  
shouldering their limbs you go back to your nation  
from the side of a chair you walk under a tree  
in a leaf you see a tower and a windstorm  
the backdrop of the storm is the fins of fish in mid-air  
in the tower are eulogies, the fragrance of funerals

Beneath another background  
a man is holding two women  
with the weather influencing the dress of a generation  
alcohol and grain all stop on fingers in this pose  
your head on a china plate vanishes without a trace  
falls in a very high place  
cools to become a moon, and burns a bridge

Finally burn the grain into wine and ladle it into a dish  
can it be the skin colour of the wine is not yours  
in a wild bout of drinking you wear a silk shirt and hold on to a tree  
the imagination of a poet is one great drunk  
yet you weep without cause  
and again dream of apples and those girls

## No Food For Poets [诗人无饭]

No food for poets, please drink soup  
once again break your wasp-thin waist, your face will get longer  
you are only a husk  
as soon as the rice of a woman sprouts  
it discards you, compels you not to eat  
forces you to love yourself, and become unable to eat  
too beautiful hair, a lifetime of incessant combing  
the mirror that has lost its face will be covered in dust  
but your look is already as thin as a pool of moonlight  
at the first breath of wind paper flowers fly every place  
you can't drink any more soup  
you have only death, so place your skin in another place  
and you have only life  
a cup of watery wine will destroy a crowd of talents

## Words, The Inner-Being [词, 内心]

A shattered vase abandons every body  
the fragrance appoints our lives  
raises us up out of thin air  
to continue in the world persevering solitude

Whoever loses their most treasured things in good weather  
will become clean and pure because of their sorrow  
as skin colour is used to warm gold  
each household container falls into its own empty cavity  
so the shattered vase is even emptier  
the heart of a seed joins hands with the flowers of two seasons  
yet we incessantly shut windows, burn paper  
let slip the opportunity of a sunny day

A thoroughgoing thing is most difficult  
abandon someone and you win someone  
the most painful or the most perfect thing, everything will mature  
while drinking tea have a bad thing appear in excess  
with a cup of watery wine ruin a mob of geniuses  
progress is not our goal

Just squeeze out a bit of blood irrigate your hair and fingers  
make the rest flow beyond the walls and grow into tall trees  
from this time we loose the windstorms of a season  
in a leaf you are eternally unable to distinguish dances from water  
whoever can penetrate with fire  
only that person can be transformed into dust  
like banned musical instruments and cast-off shells  
all hearts spread the fragrance of flowers from the same void

## A Man Passing Through Time [渡光阴的人]

Alive passing through a life  
is a difficult affair  
flowers bloom in a tree  
in their scent the people beneath wish to die  
to complete a perfect plot

In the tips of branches women fiddle with details  
possessing every kind of garment  
a great master breaks the branches, carries away the fruit  
yet the person who smells the fragrance  
excuses the unimaginable error

In the scent there's a flower vase and fragments  
someone smashes china  
someone lives wanting to die  
the sun shines on the dust  
reflects his former shape  
just as everyday he drinks tea  
poetry is an affair of a lifetime

## Words, A House [词, 房子]

At last I remember my clothing stays on the chair, my books are placed in the door crack  
suddenly red flags assault the portrait of a head  
the dust in the shadows is very cold  
it's too late for regrets

Sit on the chair, faces all face the center of the table  
finally a shape occupies the room  
like a head, an abandoned axe  
waits to be taken away by the murderer  
the hand given to the people again makes you depart from other directions  
a house is ruined by a night of blooming flowers  
the people in the corridors all hide in the nests of cuckoos  
the feet cause us one by one to walk into pairs of cotton shoes  
in the house all that remains is the hint of a suggestion

A wall calls up the wind of eight directions, it's a mirror the wind can penetrate  
the house falls into a very deep place, does not let us see  
it only leaves doors and windows, but lets us come in  
open a book or admire the vista outside the windows  
you remember Armageddon has already ended outside this book  
within and without your skin all that's left is air

## Words, The Edge of a Blade [词，刀锋]

A razor marks out a wound  
your skin suffers language  
when words reach infinity they only form an empty sound

Like the boundlessness of water draped over a face of skin  
with its invisible edge the blade pares away the looks we cast  
surnames bright and clear  
what we see and hear  
the tiniest words are stories and sand  
when the west wind comes, it blows up into a mighty, vast vista  
on the wrong path we die young  
slack the thirst of our skin with a drop of fresh blood  
with a year's moonlight cause a narcissus to burst into bloom

A blade's edge gives a surname blood  
she is already too pale, an anemic beauty cannot withstand too much grace  
with wounds she nourishes all words  
when her body bursts, words steal into teeth and hair to ripen  
the most limited words are bird and hand  
the most are innumerable birds flying into a hand  
like my entry in the night  
a word leads to everything  
the gesture of her hand corresponds to all things

One is everything  
the light seen from the flames parts from the burning  
in a deep winter, gold and silver are forged into cold swords  
when a long, slender blade lights the colour of our skin  
when spoken words are continually repeated, grow into facts  
seen or heard  
uncountable hands release birds  
weapons of war grow into gifts of jade and silk

**Moon-Set[月落]** A sequence of five poems 20/04/1988

**#1**

In the afternoon I remember a moon-set, I was closing a window, burning paper  
where will the words in the flames fly to  
if I cannot see  
a sheet of glass will slide into the seawater and drift for a thousand years  
when beasts gnaw away all plants, they desert us  
leaving only a few simple organs to cry and make sentences  
a bed readily concludes your status  
a sheet of paper writes out your whole life  
a patch of skin utterly detests books  
the ashes are emptiest, so I incessantly burn books and letters  
the more brightly gold is rubbed, it drops even deeper in the sea  
afternoon trees are greener, keeping my clear purity of former days  
the alternately falling flames of day and night burn back our feathers  
whoever pulls in their wings and flies with this afternoon  
is our loftiest desire

#2

Idle days are the most perfect  
I cannot do wrong, daily deficiencies mature  
sunlight angularly lights dust, a vase of flower scent converses with who  
the weather of an entire afternoon is placed in my hand  
forces me to go have a silk shirt newly cut  
use alcohol to splash out the revolution of a generation  
in back of eyes there is only sand and ink  
a few mandarin oranges, a plate of quail eggs  
the brightest and blackest places fuse  
pairs of quails, go in and out  
on the table all that remains is a pile of peals  
all its life a seed wants to bloom into somebody else's flower  
when a person wakes up he is more like himself  
the icy world suddenly drips on his skin  
exactly who is it who knocks at the door  
a house so quiet it tilts

### #3

When I am drunk I go into the yard and pick flowers  
slip and fall into a rotten tree  
in amber my tiny decaying corpse is suspended high by you  
your nipples are larger than me  
like two shocking plots tightly clamping me in  
repeatedly constricting me, publicly flaunting your fatal radiance  
night after night I can only bury myself in books, drink a cup of tea alone and silent for a time  
already too tired, I can't continue to waste away  
it has been long since I could write characters into paper  
also day after day I see spoken words close in  
a compass sets the time on the gunpowder  
a key suddenly is closer to the house than a hand  
your enemy loves you more  
otherwise whose body welcomes your ailment  
whose flowers incessantly die of drunkenness

#### #4

Tear up the lantern, thoroughly smash the day  
red flags, iron and organs launch mutual surprise raids  
all enemies set out from a bad piece of news  
I have long had no heart to trust in mankind  
one lyrical emotion sensed the path of a lifetime  
a mouth that returns to the hand moves people more, escapes into the ear  
hears the heart in a pile of shattered bones incessantly bombing  
iron filings in my flesh grow finger nails  
with a net of meridians the cosmos carelessly controls us  
lets the disease residing in each pressure point evade Chinese medicine  
a small needle drives out the evil, then ten fingers barter back a heart  
the beautiful brocade of a thousand years is snatched away by a beauty  
wheat drops dust from walls  
complain bitterly in the most particular prescription, and leave nursing malice  
who in fact does a very red mouth await  
the sweetest fruit is modest and speechless

## #5

Waiting for a moon-set  
under a tree I will grow tall  
a conversation that will not end for a long long time, is it not you in the grave  
the sunlight inserts itself at an angle into a bottle  
making the whole afternoon extremely dangerous  
abruptly the world is overstated, bad people are carried off by blackbirds  
I do not know who picks up a looking glass and distantly gazes at me  
through the window the whole season swarms in  
tonight's vista is sure to have been burnt up by too strong moonlight  
at this time if you do not flee, you will be as fragrant as a flower  
but it is still too early for the moon to set  
I still have enough time to be shot again  
you have only to give a pure look to somebody  
and he will more deeply fall

**The Scent of Lü Bu [吕布之香] Changchun 04/07/1988**

A sudden urge to kill, a fragrance blows over  
the coat in the bamboo is truly thin, Lü Bu  
yesterday the emperor was bearing flowers, today you can't adore them enough  
the dregs of wine drunk till death of drunkenness  
want to be a hero you're a hero  
a night of deep sleep but apparently conscious  
autumn rain in the screen delicate and profound

Tonight there are others who can not sleep alone  
some flowers race to drunkenness, others think of swords  
all beauties await poisoned wine  
Lü Bu, the autumn harvests your head  
the hemp and mulberry on the silk covers the hill in a disorderly green  
a red fringed skirt, a lover's yearning  
but in the mirror the important person is repeatedly wrong  
and in a southern blizzard resents a late spring

Last year it was snow, tonight it's still rain  
man-eating horses continue to roam free, aren't you the hanging head  
Lü Bu, the probable husband's face is covered by tears  
an impossible hero everywhere lonely  
Lü Bu, if only the fruit of the heart ripens  
who will not be blown on  
by the heart-breaking currents of air that escape the deep curtains  
Lü Bu, as long as your greatest foe is renewed every day  
the disorderly scent of skin grows stronger

## A Lifetime [一生]

In a lifetime how much paper is wasted writing poetry  
drinking very bitter Chinese poetry, the lines of a palm paralyse the people  
let others read books  
keep the outstanding sentences to yourself  
in a far-off place, I am superior and cool  
women, please continue your periods and love  
I obey your revelations

Today, skin brings us hunger  
mother and father both dead, surrounding poets are pretty and partial  
poetry is not whole  
nor people a fantasy  
lean on an illness to pass your days, write snowy vistas in praise of beauties

The words incorrectly spoken to me by somebody are probably doubly wrong  
lovers decamp into death, the ancestral land is exceptionally pretty  
in the past I was as real as a hypothesis  
too much self-love and too contemptible  
that is the love of some other person

**A Butterfly[蝴蝶]** - written while in prison in Sichuan prov. 1990-1992

A flame wrapped in paper  
dropped into a bag of tricks by an enflamed tiger  
the fragrant odour that splashes out, an agitation for the complexion of a pair of sisters

O, grain as sparse as morning stars and beans ripen  
either wash your hair with gold  
or leaning on a sunflower lower your head and sleep

O, round mirror in a trousseau, your frail  
younger sister on the other side of the air pounces, circles  
and senselessly sacrifices quivering thin wings or excuses

Causing ivory skin to give up fresh blood and white snow  
on one side you save  
on the other destroy

## An Iron Skin [铁皮]

In rooms and bowls, bodies without  
content are reclaimed and cultivated  
by clothes sewn into shoulders and minds  
burying people alive and killing them  
these small humble things, once they hit the head  
neither a sound, or a pleasant moving sound

Open a drawer, empty thoughts are immediately cashed in  
an emperor without rhyme or reason rides out of thin air  
words respectful and sincere, explain flesh sticking to bones  
as well as the pressure between silver and gold

These nations are so hollow, names with no substance  
at war in vain the two armies pass through springtime  
progeny transcending class suspended outside the window  
polite and objective, lift high a tree of paulownia blossoms  
together with me declining toward rainwater

The sound of a beautiful zither destitute and quick  
feelings spread out in the air, pass through the eyes of needles  
our happiness has no hope to ride on  
our sober empty corpses  
in iron skins pluck peppermint people  
the ironware in hand as fragile as water

Selections from **Time 1988: Air, Skin and Water** [时间 1988: 空气, 皮肤和水]  
(a sequence of 26 poems)

**Part III: Eight Poems on Fate** [命的八首诗]

**#1**

While a raised finger talks of fate, my hand  
throughout is an expression of the air. The pose is faultlessly correct, my heart as dark as this  
overtone  
when a red mouth in song thirsts to death before a cup of water, carried away by an enemy  
I'm obliged to take out my talking tongue, raise these lofty ears  
I make myself remember a stately officialese, repeatedly speak  
a few words into the air, the climate that falls at the time mingles with the talk  
becomes a window full of vistas pitched in the sky that cannot be invigorated, or grows  
into an emperor fallen in a plum blossom amid the swirling dust, drinking with a crowd of girls  
and this leads to the progress, pressing or otherwise, of an historic period or sudden death, so  
the birth of a nation and a manner of speaking are placed on a par  
and outlaws in the grass carry off a land, making me extremely careful  
If I lose my grip and smash the glass  
abruptly an empire is ruined

#2

When the dust of the collapse blows into a broad vista, all people  
fall into foul weather and endlessly grow pretty for no reason, secretly celebrate past missteps  
in extremely bad feelings a fisher and a woodcutter answer each other, repress homicidal acts  
the libretto is immaterial, like the relationship between teeth and plastic people  
and so the pressing vulgarity of the people and boredom swell up only once  
cause the state to be frequently inflamed in hearsay, the byways of sex lives renovated  
    everyday  
girls are trussed in tall towers by a tardy conjugal fate, everyday stroking their skin   scratching  
    their itch  
in mirrors only having relations with perfume, silks and menstrual periods  
the result of spying by the edge of a curtain of pearls causes the organs of night to run wild for a  
    while, eating people everywhere  
from here on there is machinery to make flesh and bones, with iron pipes to drain blood and a  
    handgun to shoot eggs  
I was arbitrarily fabricated  
generation after generation learns to eat grass, practice acupuncture, pay respect to Confucius  
leaving me forever crestfallen, just alive  
a zombie making itself widely known

### #3

I remember the moment of the birth of some machines, the blueprints dreamt up by brains  
completed by hands, and this produced means and other strengthening behaviour  
science and philosophy are all within what you practice  
creating a consistently identical consequence, the world's temperature suddenly burns your hand  
an endless stream of lazy monarchs emerges with primary school textbooks critical of liberty  
people loaf around all day, sitting they eat mountains  
in the end hands vanish from sleeves, the brain's imaginings even emptier  
the birth of idle dreams finally forces landlords to industriously farm the infertile land  
in the autumn they harvest the state grain and pay head tax  
science's view of the world plastered every place by an ancient folk prescription  
has mankind leap forward from castration and polygamy  
to sex spies, Aids and the explosion of a defensive nuclear bomb  
this makes me remember the posture of drinking water, a dry mouth  
leaves my soul guilty, I develop stomach ulcers, rough water  
in the manner of urine is pumped into a pail, exquisite water flows into blood, irrigates hair  
causes hunger to go deep into bones, to be tempered into an alloy  
lets us grow sufficiently hard scalps to meet the blow of the axe and be cut in two

#### #4

And so I obtain a fixed manner to enter language  
when I eat food, my hands hold the fuel, I observe pleasing things  
then I grow into one word among many  
immediately possess a multitude of curious treasures, spice carts, mules and horses, and female  
slaves  
I take care to remember the places they haunt, clearly remember how each of them grow  
and I become a sentence full of soul traveling unimpeded through a sinister climate  
at this moment from many directions food is passed into my hands  
the spice cart draped in colourful silks wildly pursues me  
the aim in undertaking a book abruptly undergoes a miraculous change  
from originally looking at pictures and recognising words becoming a laboratory test of a virus  
to recognise truth  
even in forums for lofty discussion, the greatest problem is surely something born out of  
nothing  
carry the words written on goat skin to those on shells and bones, and piece together poems and  
essays  
or abstract a philosophy into one word  
concentrated into one element, so light that all life finds it unbearable  
it has to drop down out of thin air, in a flash blowing a city to smithereens  
a mighty massacre by a word  
the unhurried persecution of history by a diseased sentence

## #5

I can only open my books again and look up the suspicious pacts  
but everything is watertight, like hair meticulously ordered by a comb  
I slip into a word, these neatly attired beasts  
the same as the plot laid out by a chessboard, neat, sanitary, convenient  
a multitude of brushstrokes presides over radicals and character components with a system of  
collective punishment, while mouths and shells grow long  
even my private life is often inquired into and grows into an illicit affair paraded everywhere  
syllables and semantic meaning, the curly hair and hats of fabricated characters  
for what calamity does the world not have words, there isn't an argument that doesn't exist. This  
is enough to deeply convince me  
the words in books freely liaise according to the highest instruction  
with exaggerated iron bars they seal off the inside news, already shot

And now it's even more dangerous  
at a four-way intersection, some people down knockout drops in wine  
then go on to eat buns stuffed with human flesh, I saw  
an ejaculating pen, a face that eats the dead, as well as an overbearing way of talking  
I rush to find the leak, so as to get free  
but the prison of words is boundless, a manner of wording battles its way in and out  
sometimes an extreme snake, sometimes the frenzied dance of beautiful trash  
the greatest foe appears, kills people with a song  
if you do not run now, you will fall into empty words and waste your life

## #6

My heart clearly sees behind the play a still even bigger stage in performance  
empty-minded heroes of consummate skill cup hands on their chests and swear brotherhood  
the danger tends toward a cool note, even to total opposition to the state  
leading to us being able to sit in a teahouse together with a gang of hoodlums reading an  
unofficial history  
we see very cold swords on the road to murder  
being embroidered into a tree of beautiful fruit that falls into the moon  
the sounds of incisions, uniforms for the night running wild, the heads plucked off by  
boomerangs still talking  
and still in the manner of moveable type the world pieces together open secrets  
changed into material for idle chit-chat to educate the new generation

In days of good farming weather, inside and outside the world everyone drinks big bowls of wine,  
eats large slabs of meat  
comes up with a few decent suits  
extremely bored people have full stomachs and empty minds, everyday in back gardens they  
temper their strength  
in an attempt to get a knife and a gun from the border government, they obtain closed-off wives  
and sheltered children, and a name in historical annals  
in the wind the apricot-yellow banner grows thin, ostentatiously flaps into being an indicator  
a bold decisive network of roads becomes an interlude of fancy boxing and lovely legs  
the wild land of lakes and rivers merely passes on into a sentence inscribed on a strand of hair

## #7

But another species of person runs away from the narration of written words, put about into the  
likes of flying apsaras and flames suspended in midair  
in siestas unable to sleep they drink untreated salt water, excuse every kind of evil  
mouths particular about what they eat swallow metal spit flames, the corpses that cannot die  
are high above  
or go deep into the folk strewing superstition, binding feet, promoting filial progeny  
but blood flows from the anus of the people who everywhere consume the fire and smoke of the  
human world, their forms dry up and whither away  
you can only pick out bones between the skin and flesh

Another kind of person has mastered the secret of becoming a sage: gourmet's luck  
the mouth that eats all under heaven speaks one sentence that refutes ten thousand  
beds for every purpose are born, and a grand charm is all the rage for a time  
on account of this, nude models, queens of sex appeal until cruel punishment in broad daylight  
finally conclude in the tax system and secret trials  
this leaves a tyrant incapable of ever being particular over what he eats  
breakfast alone has the power to make immortality as well as the right to guillotine a head

## #8

I maintain silence about the truth I know, like a man of great virtue  
the same as your responsibility to somebody terminally ill  
the world is yours, fundamentally ours too, but in the final analysis yours  
blast genesis from a bud, from an ovum, from an embryo, day by day death grows taller  
the fall of a moth makes a season suddenly chill  
the death of a beauty causes a generation of emperors to go missing in a mirror for a thousand  
years  
the fine china in a smile is smashed, the nation becomes a heart-rending roundelay sung plainly  
night after night  
all that is left is us, in extreme music pursuing a revolution in the arts that destroys genius  
or at a sumptuous banquet reciting the rubbish of poetry

When my gestures come to an end, a grand affair abruptly vanishes  
when I am informed of every form of death: suicide, homicide, bloodless murder  
the silence I hear is that of a human throat being cut  
the blooms flying in the wind are the heads of millions falling to the ground

The sunlight shoots in at an angle, the magnificence of the air is hard to clear  
the world is still cut to death by a drop of fresh blood, or carried away by the brilliance of a  
diamond  
as to fate, my heart is clear as never before