

# The Poetry of Wang Xiaoni 王小妮

Selections: 1980-1993

Wang Xiaoni was born in 1955 in Changchun, Northeast China. Wang first established a reputation as a “Misty Poet” in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The first four poems of this collection belong to that stage of her career. She married the noted Misty Poetry critic and poet Xu Jingya and moved with him to Shenzhen in 1985. This change also marked an abrupt change in the style of her poetry, as can be seen below. A sense of dislocation, feelings of being an outsider and of being confined (as mother and housewife) all feature prominently in her later poetry. In 1992 and 1993, she contributed poetry to Zhou Lunyou’s *Not-Not 非非* poetry journal. Since the 1990s, Wang has also made a name for herself as a writer of fiction and lyrical essays.

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## **I Feel the Sun [我感到了太阳]**

I'm walking.....  
down a long, long corridor

-- Ah, before me is a blinding window  
on two sides the walls reflect the light  
sunlight, me  
the sunlight stands at one with me!

-- Ah, so the sunlight is as powerful as this  
so warm it freezes your footsteps,  
so bright it catches your breath.  
All the sunlight of the universe is gathered here.

-- I don't know what else there might be  
only me, leaning against that sunlight  
standing still for ten seconds  
sometimes ten seconds can be longer than a quarter of a century

At last, I charge down the stairs, heave open the door,  
and run in the spring sun.....

## Children [孩子们]

Some children are lying down in the distance,  
mown wormwood as their pillow,  
they count drifting clouds.

Suddenly they run up and pester me with "blind words,"  
like little black buddhas,  
they sit in an orderly circle.

I start to tell them of the fastest cars,  
petulantly, they yell:  
"Senseless gossip, it's all senseless gossip"

Stupefied they sit for a time,  
laughing, they go to tote wormwood,  
and bound heavy footed downhill.  
On the hillside,  
the firewood collectors have worn a path –  
like an old yellow ribbon it swirls.

Moving bails of hay,  
on the path,  
obliterated by wisps of smoke on the wind.....

## A Birthday Night [生日的晚上]

The city!  
Neon lights  
flashing in the far-off square.  
The girls have come,  
wearing the colorful clothes of astronauts,  
I really can't remember  
the look of us as we bundled corn  
in the nests of snow.

Like innumerable pigeons breaking up,  
the hot steam of the boiling dumplings  
and "The Blue Danube"  
drift about  
in my little room  
filled with stacks of books and manuscripts.  
How is it that I can't  
walk into the hot steam?  
Everybody's kneading balls of sticky rice,  
all crowded onto the one stove-bed of brick.  
The fire in the stove dies,  
and an icy wind rattles doors and windows.....

They say dancing  
helps one forget the past.  
Yet I stand by the window,  
watching incessantly  
the night sky in which three stars have yet to come out  
and the white intimate frost.

They take their leave.  
A huge maple tree  
overlooks all this,  
the shadows of workers and university students,  
with deep  
dark looks.

..... They're going,  
laughing,  
knocking over snowmen  
children built beside the road.....

In fact, no one can forget.

On this birthday night,  
In a dream I see,

bright and clear,  
the brook that runs through the village,  
the sun on a heap of kindling  
comforting and warm,  
the egg granny boiled for me  
sweet smelling and savory

## There's This Sort of Village [有这样一个小村]

There's a village,  
and each year  
there's snow that falls there.  
In the village are a dozen families or so,  
when snow falls, a dozen or so thatched roofs  
like the white bread rolls  
the villagers eat when an old year passes.

That year,  
the winter was especially cold.  
On the east side there was the noisy addition of a home.  
The next day, in the little courtyard,  
a snowman stood  
wrapped in a bright red shawl.

Suddenly, nine years pass.....

For nine years of nights  
two lamps in the village are the last to go put.  
I really can't understand  
those children who wear "mirrors" on their faces,  
why they're always sprawled over books.  
Deep in the night,  
occasionally the sound of singing too.

Slowly,  
the villagers gave them their attention.  
Even the reels of wire  
were carried in from the city.  
Though to hear it from their lips  
they still didn't believe those delicate lines.

The village had thirteen small gardens.  
In them the "disappearance" of  
carrots and shallots began.  
The women,  
their hearts pained, often swore,  
but didn't want to know  
who the hungry devils were.

Through all nine years,  
no great disaster,  
never less food, never more either.  
The villagers lived as always,  
yet how did they

ever get through it!

.....there are always people young and enthused on this earth.

For those nine years

on the east side of a village on a hill,

there lived twenty-or-so students from the city.

One day,

they were all gone.

The villagers say,

it was just one of those odd things.

Love [爱情] February 1985

During that cold autumn

Your hands  
won't soak in cold water  
Your overcoat  
will be pressed every night by me  
The thick white sweater  
I knit and never finish  
miraculously it is rushed out  
into a time when it must be worn

In that cold autumn  
you must be a neatly dressed person

Talk and laughter  
leaves the good and the bad  
simultaneously at a loss  
Talking and laughing  
pulling us by the hand  
I insert us in every seam  
where there are people

Originally I was to give birth to a bird with huge wings  
but right now  
I have to hunch my shoulders  
become a nest  
let those unwilling to raise their heads  
all see  
make them see  
the sky's great weight  
make them experience  
the atrophy of the heart

That autumn day, so cold it moves me  
That harsh and resolute  
love in you and me

**A White Horse [白马]** March 1985

A myth says a hopelessly white horse  
abandons its grassland and gallops  
and the sunlight's like a drum

Muddled, my thoughts wander  
when I hear the story  
my eyes close in a flash I see myself  
and can but laugh

Boundless green  
looking back, tresses over ears, scattering,  
what's a homeland for

All day a child  
shakes a box full of chessmen, listens to the sound  
like horses  
galloping in chaos  
I sit bolt upright in a deep place  
in veneration of the animals and people who follow after

The white horse can't imagine  
what lies in front  
of course I can't think either  
and only want this long travelled road of boundless white

**The Continual Allure of Wars Embedded in Square Frames** [连紧不断的嵌在框里的战争诱惑] January 1986

In front of a TV screen  
a mother and son  
talk of war  
full of tender feelings.  
The three-year-old worries about  
how he could look when he weeps after his mother falls.  
The thirty-year-old mother fantasizes:  
The first shot's bound to be blank.

Suddenly,  
two army trucks collide,  
mother and son leap up all  
hands and feet  
splash out together following the blood everywhere.

When father enters,  
he discovers two  
people totally confused,  
strange notions like bats  
flash in their eyes.  
Call them  
and they simply don't respond.  
They only flicker bright and dark  
together with the TV.

Avoiding the hubbub,  
the mother and son  
are fixed solid every night  
in front of the TV screen,  
nothing in the world like  
shooting oneself  
can move a person more.

**A Well-known Allusion to the Red Slippers that is too Late to be Avoided [躲闪不及的红舞鞋的著名典故]**

Three girls  
buy pretty red shoes  
at the same time

Under a tree that's about to wither,  
the three halt at the same time,  
open their packages to peek:  
an idea  
that cools them on the spot.

Immediately they haven't the strength to walk  
and search everywhere for a deep submerged place.  
They throw the shoes  
into a stone cavern, for a long, long time  
there's no sound of their fall to earth.

Three perplexed people with no boundaries  
stand against the wind.  
Not knowing how to prevent  
the final scene that comes from far away.  
And just at that moment  
their hands also turn red,  
their feet turn red,  
and their voices too

Whole arms and legs  
flutter under water faucets,  
when they meet a traveller  
their heads are sunk over washing out the sobs.

They don't know what for,  
but they're too late to avoid it.

Too late to skip it by.

**A Jar of Nescafe has Me Wandering in the Night [一瓶雀巢咖啡使我浪迹暗夜] 1986**

When I think wild thoughts,  
this brown thing's  
in the dark twisting  
on its black lid by itself.

I've heard it said  
coffee exacerbates insomnia.  
And if you drink lots  
your skin turns black,  
yet, still I can't resist, I drink it.

I certainly never thought  
the transformation would be so quick, so thorough,  
my arms have become huge wings,  
through the black night I drift, a bird.

I lower my body to touch an unbroken chain of nightmares  
at the edge of the bed.  
I want to callout, but my mouth's full of bird talk,  
and that person who always walks behind mine,  
his bent over back,  
is simply bristling with filthy standing water.

There are many, many feathers,  
but it's still cold.  
I say to the brown thing,  
let me change back to a person,  
I can't stand it,  
this thing I went to buy myself  
replies in its true colors:  
It's too late too long.

**At a Mixed-up Junction, I Meet a Mixed-up Man Asking Directions** [在错杂的路口，遇上一个错杂的问路人]

I've decided  
before that person walks near  
to duck into an alley,  
because  
the look of him frightens.

As it happens he wants to ask directions of me,  
when he asks  
his tone is mild  
and he extends a right hand in a glove.

I tell him,  
you can walk along with me,  
he's not an evil man I presume.

Does this type of person still need directions?  
When I part with him,  
he raises the right hand again  
mockingly,  
I discover no sign of the glove,  
his hand is entirely black.

In the dark  
I'm filled with a profound black apprehension.  
Each wall  
sings in high praise of black,  
all the one hand

How can this inhuman  
hand be in the world?!

**I'm Sure Someone's Climbed onto the Sundeck and is Deliberately Tampering with Me in  
the Dark [定有人攀上阳台，蓄意暗中篡改我] 1986**

I have just hung out my bed sheet,  
and someone hammers on the floor,  
calling yellow water's running down!  
I go specially to take another look,  
my bed sheet  
is purest blue.

I lean on the strong light,  
I shouldn't have gone to sleep,  
after I wake up in a daze,  
all the pages from the letter in my hand fall,  
surprisingly dirty, after it has jumbled  
the order of the pages.

I say, to this nonentity  
I'm a dire and calamitous person,  
he says: This is  
the last pick, he squeaks  
like a mouse  
begging my pardon.

From thenceforward, I stop often on the sundeck,  
conversing with this tamperer,  
learning of many other  
world affairs,  
nowhere is there a door onto this sundeck,  
and this continuing dialogue,  
makes me unbearably happy.

**A Dead Person has no Friends Anymore [死了的人就不再有朋友] 1987**

Now a person wearing an army uniform says,  
a dead person has no friends anymore.  
This person raises the right leg to talk,  
going on and on he grows small.  
Over the graveyard flocks of black birds  
caw as they flutter.

But, I see clearly  
I'm still alive.

I live.  
Air still crosses over my hands.  
Fingers glitter, just  
    like gold.  
I live and  
no one can walk close.  
No third hand  
can take hold of mine.  
Behind me a walnut tree emerges suddenly  
I see only  
its wise supple shadow.

You carry over a pile of pillows.  
Say some fine words.  
And briefly see life can also touch one.  
Your glance drags over everything,  
black tie pulled down to the ground.  
You say I'm a splendid nothing.

I knew long ago,  
I not here, for certain.  
I sit very quietly in a different place.  
Watching suns and moons  
none entirely ideal.

I walk up close to you, making sounds.  
The world leisurely withdraws  
smiling in the manner a flower.  
Great, there are no friends for me.

**Passing through an Oppressive Black Night** [经历沉闷又黑暗的夜晚] 1987

In the murk of dark you say  
you must sleep.  
But I sit, wanting to watch over it.

The evening is a lump of filthy mud.  
The mud a black rhinoceros.  
Darkness makes me impatient to get closer to it,  
stand in it  
as happy as if I'd just plopped into the world.

Now I'm even duller than mud.  
I walk up to it,  
want to think up a complex thought for it.

-- Could you not have been given birth in the dark.  
with you like this, I can't sleep.  
You, the malicious black night,  
you cage me in the dark.  
-- I can't see you. I say:  
Is this the way.

In this black night I get up, composed,  
changed into a woman with long hair.  
My fingers like white feathers once again.  
Warming your kneecaps with my caress.

Alive from dawn till night.  
A person cannot always see the light.  
I say, I will pursue the discharge of the dark.

Your look begins to blacken again.  
In a night with not much air,  
find the brute truth that makes a person great.

**Many Many Pears** [许许多多的梨子] May 1988

On the table the sounds of plants  
turn up smoothly  
the first time, like a baby,  
I've heard a plant's cry for help,  
standing on a burning bright red prairie  
now it's deathly pale

In my home under a lamp shade like a tangerine  
your nimble and translucent hands  
wield a keen knife  
You can't peel a pear this way.  
Beside you I suddenly touch  
life's brute energy.

Fruit moves on trees  
free in the wind.  
You turn the knife, genteelly;  
You do harm, genteelly.  
.The giant form of the knife's shadow passes  
like the irrational limbs of our human kind

I watch my hands  
and observe the other pair  
I'm fond of day and night

But there are many many pears  
The tree  
nurtures them offhandedly and shakes them off  
A planet of many many pears  
people see them and cry out with thirst

## Close the House Door Tight [紧闭家门]

I wake from siesta  
and discover  
I write the best poetry  
in this very large country.  
Best if this thought  
breed densely like the second hands  
of clocks. The incessant sound of drums  
careers from you toward me.  
Like bells, weeds wail out  
the hour. I understand  
the moment I must close the door  
and write a poem is here

Close the house door tight  
sit down and love the world again  
the mildew stains on all four walls  
glimmer remotely on me, seated.

Let people sunk deep in heavy siege  
listen everywhere  
Let people thinking of offering a defense  
stop short for one moment.  
Write words on paper arbitrarily  
no one has ever given poetry recognition  
nobody ever  
thought one could live gracefully

The sun  
pecks at my thin door  
Tell it someone is writing a poem.  
Your eyes float massively on top.

Behind you on either side  
a sky full of stars incites  
I want to tell myriad things to be quiet.

A posse of illusions  
passes through the four walls  
and drifts toward me.  
My world way out there has stepped in.

**Half of Me is Pain** [半个我正在疼痛] May 1988

There is a small beautiful bug  
aspiring to bore into my tooth.

The world  
its right side moves me suddenly  
originally my body  
was merely a tumble-down building

Inside one half of me a black fire dances  
half of me is packed full of the sound of medicinal liquids

You extend, your hands  
one grabs hold of me  
the other grasps air with no transparency in it  
pain is life too  
we will never hold it down

Sitting, then standing  
let the wind blow this way and that.  
When the pain flickers  
then we discover the world is unusual after all.  
We're unhealthy  
but  
still want to walk about

The pain-free half  
is infatuated with you  
the left hand pushes at a door.  
The right side of the world colorful and bright  
the long hair of pain  
billows off and becomes a jungle  
That is me too  
That's yet another good woman

## Someone Who Doesn't Retort [不反驳的人]

I'm sitting  
on a white china pot under the eye of the sun.  
Motionless for a long time  
I become someone who's entire body is still

Suddenly somebody howls  
the sound of it shrinks me.  
Swaying  
the boss's facial features are all sharp  
I watch closely when the world is lifted up  
that momentary flurry.  
More vast than a mouth.  
Yelling must be a real kick.

But I don't offer a retort  
I stand up  
ten thousand things squirm in solitude.  
Beneath the sun three china cups are added  
the water calls too  
and fireflies burn fingers

Three fat guys  
sit disdainfully on the world  
I watch over it  
and bow down to serve tea for everybody  
on the earth's surface  
shoe after shoe inclines forward.  
I haven't had a thing to say for a long time.

The sky is soft and kind.  
But someone suffers a evil illness.  
The sky looks straight down on us no more.  
Black clouds squat on the crowns of our heads

A shout is the shimmer of a scythe.  
But the grassland  
has waited long to lie waste.  
We're green grass no more.  
Breathing brittle branches and ruined leaves  
we've learned how  
to hold the tea pots and not retort.

## I Love to Look at Cigarettes Laid out in Rows [我爱看香烟排列的形状]

Sitting among friends of yours and mine  
our words ramble far and wide  
we open packs of cigarettes one after another  
I love to look at cigarettes laid out in rows  
and always want  
to break them apart with my own hands, too

While the men hesitate  
I'm so lissom  
The sky and earth  
rock me gently  
When the insides of cigarette butts hang their heads  
only they can hang that deep  
into the purple and red flare

at the core    Now I stand up  
The sun says it saw light  
Warmed by your hands  
a crustacean even smaller than a crustacean  
moves tirelessly  
and sees many many children below its smoke.

I despise frailty  
but tears sometimes change into red grit  
especially during my gloomier days  
I must coddle men

This world should feel fortunate  
to have me living in it  
and stretch out the weak hand  
I love profoundly  
the weighty unbearable pain

**I Ought to be a Maker** [应该做一个制作者] March 1988

One year they ordered me to make wheat.  
My arms grew ripe and keen.  
Another year they commanded me to make hemp rope.  
Much of the time my thoughts flew away.  
Now I sit writing a poem before the dawn light.  
You say I don't look well  
I'm ill

When I caught this sickness  
You were rushing from east to west in the city  
you still want to chat and smile with the ugly people.  
You say you're undergoing a test.  
I see I'm too sick  
all because I take a liking to  
a parachute  
drifting over from a fond season of romance

The powerful good in your world  
I can't see  
I write the world  
and then out comes the world, head-bowed  
I write you  
and then you take your glasses off, look at me  
I write a me  
and see my hair is dismal, ought to be cut  
Only a person able to be a maker  
is truly extraordinary.

Please take a brief nap  
and then leave me alone for good  
I still want to write poems  
I'm still the obstinate maker  
in my narrow room

**A Topic of Talk [一个话题] August 1988**

Big Beard has come.  
His back-pack lies under the lamp.  
Big Beard's soul  
is a squad of Yankee invaders of Vietnam who have lost their way.

That day he said:  
How can you be so bright  
sitting on a sofa?  
Big Beard just has a big beard.  
I ask him  
where he's deposited his soul.

Bright light and anxiety  
can all be called philosophy.  
And philosophy can be freely altered on the sly.  
It's a swindler.  
I sit on a bamboo mat.

These days sitting on bamboo mats you can only lose, miserably.  
People outside the door are blindingly bright.  
I sit at home  
in a dark spot watching people and trees  
all exceptionally clear.

The business of war is probably spreading.  
Because he had lost his way, Big Beard won't be back.  
Why yearn for him  
like an oldster longing for two glass handballs.  
Stack up lots of seat cushions.  
Gloomy like an aged lama in a grotto.  
Never again can anyone sneak inspiration to me through my ear.  
Sitting under that lamp  
can it really be bright?

**A Red Color Emerges Out of My Skin [皮肤中浮现了红色] August 1988**

In front of cool, bright windows  
like ripe apples  
we expose a level of lovely radiance.  
I know  
it is a leech  
wanting to bore into the perfect entrails of my body.

When I face other faces,  
I can only laugh along with them.  
From this person to that  
a radiance that gushes back and forth  
leaves me empty handed.  
Never wanting to touch people again.

I stare at my skin.  
Watch the color of others  
slowly emerge from it.  
Don't talk of impersonating an apple.  
Being a light.  
Impersonating a gentle woman.  
Everything above my stomach  
tightens with fear.

Exposing myself to the outside is very dangerous.  
I'm one forced to reflect light.

Daytime. The city wears shiny wooden shoes.  
I'm its toes  
stared at by a multitude of eyes.  
When will that day  
come again, misty as a poem.

**A Person with a Pineapple in Hand [手拿菠萝的人] 1991**

Someone with a fresh pineapple their hand  
comes walking down from a patch of brightness,  
masters the fragrance of golden fruit.

The path through  
winds like a python toward me.  
Footsteps that fall to the dust  
float and flutter marvelously.  
I'll never be able to get a clear  
head-on look at those to come.

The odor of large celestial bodies  
above the dirt  
are many lofty smells --  
just like a great man moving on the surface of the sea.  
And their fruit cannot help  
but fall among us.  
Indifferently loved.

We pass through illumination.  
No benevolent arm  
fells the unfortunate.  
The pineapple holder  
walks now into the far distance.

I sigh over the smallness of the distant traveler  
like a brown pine needle  
in the north wind.

**A House of Great Depth [很纵深的房子] 1991**

Mangos on the table.

I open today's window.  
The house is stuffed with mangos.  
sunlight laughs like a woman  
warm and flush.  
Fruit undulate on her body.

For many years now not only green  
fruit has come tumbling down.  
The heads of Dao Zhi<sup>1</sup> and the King of Qin<sup>2</sup>  
fell back to earth too.  
The splendors dim.  
We build  
our own house.  
Pleased to have no doors no windows.

Hear my vivacious  
gold horizon incessantly.  
Hear the beauty  
in me when I have sunk low,  
sick of being the realist.

This is a happy day.  
It's the day I can see mangos.

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<sup>1</sup> A powerful bandit leader during the Spring-Autumn Period of the Zhou Dynasty, 722-481 B.C.E.

<sup>2</sup> Later to become the first emperor of the unified empire of China; the Qin 221-206 B.C.E.

From **Seeing a Friend** [看望朋友] a series of 6 poems, 1992

#1

On this, Beijing's coldest day,  
I almost shrink  
back as I walk toward you.  
Your hands  
hang limply down.  
People say that inside is  
the hot air of Chinese herbal medicine.

I can't see the temperature.  
Can't see your illness.  
Just as I can't see through  
the compound-dwelling holding you firm and deep.  
Standing in front of your bed  
I'm a patch of heavy fog.

The backs of your hands  
secrete a weak white light like the moon's.  
I dare not callout  
your name of over two years' pain.

I understand all the world's affairs.  
only when I'm closest to you  
I discover  
I can't even say  
what sickness is.

### #3

With what can you feel  
me under this lamp.  
Do you want to touch this ball of light.

One hand can  
rustle the locust tree leaves of the entire city.  
But this hand droops low.  
A soft bed sinks you down deep.  
And I've only brought  
today's cold air.

How can I be a ball of light.  
We stand in the same shadow.  
During your two years in a soporific state  
I always cautiously  
stroked our degrees of difficulty.

It is those difficulties  
that cause you to immediately recognize me.  
Your thin cataracts creep down  
from a mountain peak thick with misery.  
Finally, I see your smile.

#### #4

In the last  
tiniest  
remaining corner of the world  
I run into a deceit

Somebody leans low over the bed saying  
you're prettier than ever.  
The people outside love you even more.

Only one step away from deceit  
I can't expose.  
You probably come to for a few minutes only.  
I want to say  
If you look at them long enough, red pills are a lot like seeds.  
What I really want to say is  
people like best  
gathering around for a close look  
at a wound.

I can't help wanting to cover up  
everything on the outside.  
Day by day a complicated fear  
coils through my heart.

The quilt is covered  
by the wrinkles put in it.  
I don't know what angle to stand at  
or how many hands to use  
to block the line of sight flickering in your eyelashes.

## #5

Remember when at my house  
you said you envy my quiet  
empty flower vase.

Now  
several medicine bottles are half empty.  
Numberless pills  
prop up your consciousness.  
Tranquility is dead water  
spreading out sleek white silk.

Can others make the air laugh.  
Help a stone find strength.  
And make suffering  
pull out its sword.  
A massive illness  
drills into your slight kindly body.  
Miracles like angels  
soar elegantly above.

Nobody can carry off  
the hope in an empty bottle.  
No person can control  
your coma gliding across the four seasons.

#7

Slowly, slowly  
I remember each old friend.

They refuse to write.  
Refuse to phone.  
Deep in fear of reality knocking on their doors.  
The old friends  
come down with a yesterday syndrome.

When all living things are up against the wind  
your soul  
keeps its beautiful black eyes open throughout.

Listen and you'll hear  
think and you'll imagine  
the houses of old friends roar  
and lift painful, long flames.  
These robust people  
what are they waiting for.

You say you want to go  
From days in flames  
to days in flames  
it's so close  
With light hands and light feet  
old friends have already opened front doors for you.

#9

I dare not walk close to you.  
Dare even less to take leave.  
Your parents  
like a church packed with believers.  
Stand by the aged stair-well.

Because of you  
their radiance has all peeled away.  
Your black cloud  
envelops the hill that gazes at you.

Hide you in sickness.  
Hide you in medicine.  
Hide you in hearts with holes.  
A person who doesn't walk on the street  
very quickly everyone forgets.

Days and days.  
You walk while lying alone face up.  
In Heaven the weight of the great  
oaken gates resounds incessantly.

At the final moment the tears arrive.  
All hatred and consolation blurs.  
Quickly walk back onto the street.  
In your ears  
from left to right  
you're run through by the muffled toll of a bell.

## #10

I've seen pain with my own eyes.  
A bright red leech  
easily slices through your translucent body.

With my eyes I saw  
a person broken without a sound.  
Like a coiling  
tangled cord.

I've seen death with my own eyes.  
A stupa standing on a precipitous height.  
Life's wrinkles  
bunch up at the peak of the wind's forehead.

I saw all this myself.  
As the links peeled off,  
a thin weak sound.

One vein  
makes cotton and diamonds  
diamonds and blank paper  
blank paper and plasma  
plasma and abruptly changing airflows  
form a common link.

I've seen everything with my own eyes.

**The Softest Season** [最软的季节] May 1993

In the month of May  
I can see farthest.  
Memories like new bugs  
agitate a hillside's south face.  
I know  
the softest season will soon arrive.

In May  
of course I can see you.  
Again you're made up as the finest gossamer  
sadly, sweetly mounting  
my enclosing walls two thousand kilometers away.

I decide  
to forget the whole of my life.  
I have no connection to you.

My water  
neither forms ice nor is it warm.  
Nobody can move me  
not even May.  
Today my solidness  
surpasses that of any shell-bearing seed.

Spring is as short as a fingernail.  
And I never again need be your tree  
performing season after season.  
Now  
I carry my own roots.  
Tread on my own brittle branches rotten leaves.

**I See the Potatoes [看到土豆] May 1993**

When I see a basket of potatoes  
my heart's as happy as if I'd run into a wandering soul.  
Joy makes a  
hot-headed north-easterner.

I want to look closely at their facial features  
find out what has happened.

All my body's tight suture lines break.

I want to immediately stop  
I want to halt the whole of me.  
Ask a cigarette of a heavy smoker  
I want his last cigarette.

No blow  
can surpass that of a basket of potatoes.

Return to the past  
like drifting to Jupiter on a pair of feet.  
But today I saw potatoes.  
In a trice I tread  
Jupiter's burning rings of light.

## People Waiting for Buses [等巴士的人们] 1993

The morning sun  
shines on a bus stop.  
Some are painted with oils  
suddenly they have kind pleasant looks  
These are such nice people.

Light descends  
amidst a crowd waiting for a bus  
utterly without mercy  
splitting each in two.  
I suspect  
behind the nice people  
those dark colorless ones are bad.

No bus for a long long time  
the brilliant eye-catching sun can't wait any more.  
The oil paints will also run away  
the good and bad people  
change inch by inch.

The places just now petty and dull  
take on bright charm.  
God  
your light  
wavers so.  
You pitiful  
high fevered blind man  
The good you see is evil too  
the evil also good.

Later the bus stop is vacant  
black clouds trick the god into an abyss.

**Weakness Comes So Quick [脆弱来得这么快] 1993**

I've never seen this expression on your face.  
No wonder  
all the china is smashed. Every bottle is broken to bits.  
You're motionless  
as if all the shards of your body's glass are about to fall.  
The door is a devil opening in a flash.  
You halt at the doorway.  
Needles of light surely stab you deep in the back  
your expression stops at lightning's start. Feet covered by snowflakes  
leave you standing in slivers of silver the whole world now dazzlingly bright.,  
A sky full of translucent objects and suddenly the sky flows.  
Where have you tucked away your up-lifting looks you're such a hopeless l\_p.  
In your eye is a nose in the nose a mouth  
in the mouth ears  
on your face nothing.  
Your expression terrifies me I really didn't know  
weakness could come so quick

Alive [活着] 1993

Sunlight walks outside the home.  
In the home am I  
a calm, collected idler

Three meals a day  
handling docile vegetable hearts  
my hands  
float in a semi-transparent white china bowl.  
When I think of other things  
the white rice has already been  
cooked into white food again.

The screen door  
stands straight in the wind like a servant boy  
watching me sleep through an afternoon of sudden light and dark.  
My letterbox is packed with dust.  
A person at home  
waits for nothing.

All around the house  
are dangerous winding pipes.  
Poured full  
of water, gas or electrical currents  
they snuggle up close around me  
with a casual flick of a switch  
in front and behind me  
the appropriate measures of water and fire burst out.

The sun and moon are in the sky  
this is a day without traces.  
Behind a peasant the color of soy sauce  
I lean down to pat a long, round melon.  
The slight yellowness on its back is  
the isolated form of the sun.

For no reason  
just alive  
like turning on a thread of running water at a whim.

Only I have tried  
the uncertain perilous atmosphere  
slicing through the surface of this world.  
I live plainly like this.  
My fire is  
forever wrapped in my writing paper