

The Poetry of Ouyang Jianghe 欧阳江河

Selections: 1984-1995

Ouyang Jianghe was born September 1956 in Luzhou in Sichuan Province. Because he shared his name (Jianghe) with the already famous Misty poet from Beijing, in 1985 added the Ouyang as a prefix so as to differentiate the two. It was also in this year that he began to participate in Sichuan's rowdy unofficial poetry scene, taking on a behind-the-scenes role in the production of various journals, such as *Day By Day Make It New* 日日新 and *Han Poetry* 汉诗, while contributing to most major journals in the province and some outside, such as *Tendency* 倾向, during the rest of the 1980s and on into the 1990s. During the same period, an increasing quantity of Ouyang's poetry and critical essays appeared in official literary journals, but it was not until 1997 that his first book-length collection of poetry and essays was officially published. In the early 1990s, he was able to obtain a passport and spent several months in the USA and western Europe. Ouyang has written little poetry or criticism in recent years, and now resides in Beijing.

- 1) Selections from **The Suspended Coffin** [悬棺]
 - Chapter 1: A Book of Heaven Without Words** [第一章: 无字天书]
 - Chapter 2: The Art of Escape of the Five Elements** [第二章: 五行遁术]
 - Chapter 3: A Pocket-size Flower Garden** [第三章: 袖珍花园]
- 2) **A Night in Your Silhouette** [背影里的一夜]
- 3) **A Public Monologue** [公开的独白]
- 4) **The Death of a Swan** [天鹅之死]
- 5) **Shostakovich: Waiting to be Shot** [肖斯塔科维奇: 等待枪杀]
- 6) **Girls Out of School** [放学的女孩]
- 7) **Between Chinese and English** [汉英之间]
- 8) **The Glass Factory** [玻璃工厂]
- 9) **An Apple Tree in Sunlight** [阳光中的苹果树]
- 10) **Wisdom's Dance of the Skeleton** [智慧的骷髅之舞]
- 11) **Seawater Bites Deepest to the Bone** [最刺骨的火焰是海水]
- 12) **The Beauty** [美人]
- 13) **The Hand Gun** [手枪]
- 14) Selections from **The Final Mirage** [最后的幻想]
 - I. **A Strawberry** [草莓]
 - II. **Blackbirds** [黑鸦]
 - III. **Butterflies** [蝴蝶]
 - IV. **First Snow** [初雪]
 - V. **Books** [书卷]
- 15) **The Fast Food Restaurant** [快餐馆]
 - I. **#3**
 - II. **#5**

III. #8

- 16) **Stand Firm** [确立]
- 17) **Love in the Time of the Planned Economy** [计划经济时代的爱情]
- 18) **Tsvetaeva** [茨维塔耶娃]
- 19) **The Reading Room** [阅览室]
- 20) **The Mark of the Leopard** [豹徽]
- 21) **Crossing the Square at Nightfall** [傍晚穿过广场]
- 22) **The Season of a Full Moon** [月圆时节]
- 23) **A Bottle of Ink** [墨水瓶]
- 24) **Refusal** [拒绝]
- 25) **Dinner** [晚餐]
- 26) **Spring** [春天]
- 27) **A Daytime Beauty** [白日美人]
- 28) **In an Elevator** [电梯中]
- 29) **The Homeland of an Alien** [异乡人的故乡]
- 30) **Hamlet** [哈姆雷特]
- 31) **Our Sleep, Our Hunger** [我们的睡眠，我们的饥饿]

Selections from **The Suspended Coffin** [悬棺], a prose poem in three chapters. (1984-1985)

Chapter I: A Book of Heaven Without Words [第一章：无字天书]

Every moment is the same moment.

The silence you now hear is absolute: with the honor of a despot it enters the body of flesh and blood that rules all things and becomes five fiery horses galloping in five directions. The internal organs fracture and scatter into five elements -- metal, wood, water, fire, and dirt.

The Book of Heaven you now read has eyes for words: each eye is the disappearance of a language or a pile of shattered vistas, propagating taboos and subterfuge. Echoes drift by, ranges of mountains sleep like beauties. The rain of yellowing plums is suspended without comment, everywhere songs and sobs are dried by the sun to become the salt in salt.

The body you now touch is shaped like nothing: facing empty wastelands, facing a species all of one face, sometimes collected sometimes scattered, of incessant life and death, there is no soul to be called to the suspended coffin, nothing sacred to manifest. The shining path of heaven splashes out to become wind and water, all empty illusions of your eyes and ears.

A king of kings with no country and no crown: who is that?

.....

Chapter 2: The Art of Escape of the Five Elements [第二章：五行遁术]

Every home is the same home.

Wishful thoughts of fighting free of the knots, a form of governance, a shape to time indifferently won from the whirling flight of a strange bird, remote and still, and moving, do not ask who goes and who stays. A chorus of incantations blows the lucky day into a cold tune, until it blows out blood, until eyes crack before they close like scars, until, in the light, tempestuous shadows form a crystal clear uncertainty.

Now that the first drop has fallen, the blood will all run out. Since life after life still returns to the same deception, the same rite, empty of everything -- therefore death has it all.

Funerals by sky, by earth, by water, by fire, and by wind.

A burial in a suspended coffin.....

Chapter 3: A Pocket-size Flower Garden [第三章：袖珍花园]

Each inspiration is the same inspiration.

Inside another death, the flower garden is everything. The dream-omen of butterflies of uncertain origin is all but a withering fall without flowers, a burning with no fire. An eye full of disorder empty of everything, suddenly the garden has no body. An empty coffin absolved of its body is suspended alone in another astrological array.

The smile that confuses the arrangement is laid on Jupiter's head, like lightning, like an incision that carves deep in, so the seasons suddenly reverse their spin. In the eyes that cannot open is the sleeping soul of the first ancestor bird, every time it wakes it is leveled into the earth's surface, the folds of fish scales appear willy-nilly across the injured sky.

The entire generalized flower garden where no flower can bloom is metaphysical, as soon as you wait to be suspended you are hung up forever. The rapidly shifting faces of people and weird, invisible flowers mingle, indistinguishable; willfully pluck a blossom and at the same time you pluck a human head. So, the flower garden is an excessively exaggerated red.

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So, an incisive look will reveal mankind to be wholly faceless, appearing as everything but being nothing. suddenly, it attaches its bodies to those unpenetrated formless forms, those soul-reviving black arts that knead clay into flesh and turn water to blood, today's future is collected among the apparently waxen figures of posterity. Suddenly, what is grasped becomes a hand, what is heard becomes sound, water that does not run is blood or glass, or a pool of silence.

So, the sole mass body will form within individual conceit. Clothes of every color and pattern mix by way of tattooed torsos. Human heads and the heads of beasts mix by way of knife blades that flash as one. Food and hunger mix through a purifying fast. The flower garden and the suspended coffin mingle through transmigration.

So, this inspiration will be the only inspiration: people who bury flowers also bury themselves, placing yourself in a flower garden is to put yourself in a suspended coffin. No boundary exists.

This sole inspiration arrived on the day of birth, and remains only to leave on the day of doom.

A Night in Your Silhouette [背影里的一夜]

A drop of blood makes me remember all kinds of wounds
but not all wounds bleed
otherwise hair and the smell of a sword would not flow over my body
a sudden meeting on an itinerant blade seems so keen
a calm demeanor loses you your shadow, but it is the shadow itself that shifts
a stone has only to be set in a treetop to spill the flesh of fruit
if you do not believe then make the flower buds fall and cover the deep courtyard
regretfully all this is too marvelous for words

You imagine yourself a nun in white
as a narcissus of one night in the slow leak behind you
in an insolvable riddle worries pent up like a swan
as soon as the moonlight dragged over the dirt is thrown off like a skirt
your body swells up into night
inside candles and loneliness shine, a pair of censers too
you strike at the bars in the lines of a poem with the middle of the night
cause vacuous lovers' complaints to fill the little boxes
make one blossom bloom into the dance of all flowers
the more you pick the more there are, in a quiet night everything is a riot of falling flowers

At dawn you have a chest full of heart ache, a head cold and white
makes it seem you see stretches of March's white pear blossoms fly up
what falls on your face is a tear, what falls into the wind flute is a soul that cannot be summoned

A Public Monologue [公开的独白]

I am dead. You still live.
None of you know me, just as you have never known the world.
What remains of me becomes an immortal death mask
compelling you to resemble one another
no self, and no other.
Each apple I have blessed
grows into Autumn, forming the most apples and hunger.
Each bird you see is my soul.
The shadow I cast is more definite than any light.

The place in which I am finally buried is a collection of books.
There, your lives
are lightly excised like superfluous words.
God is this simple, has only to simply speak, then forget.
All eyes open just for one glimpse.
Without my song, you would have no lips.
But what you have sung and will go on to sing
is only boundless silence, not a song.

The Death of a Swan [天鹅之死]

The death of a swan is the thirst of a stretch of water
Helen flows from a bloodthirsty pose
the death of a swan is the dance of an invisible dancer
inside immutable change a natural delight that forms itself

Or merely a self-forgetting beyond all things
a shadow rocking a city under siege
that on six sides causes the wind to be pinned down in an empty valley
causes the twice-open hole of love to lay bare the chill of the previous night

Whoever rises he is the tyrant
the world's form escapes in the flesh
a caress reveals another nude body
-- it is not clear where Leda went

Shostakovich: Waiting to be Shot [肖斯塔科维奇：等待枪杀] April 7, 1986

An entire life he waits to be shot
he sees his name displayed together with the innumerable dead
however long the years may be, however long is the list of death

All his music is a grieving for himself
the sobs of thousands of dead souls resound in it
some human heads drop, like fruit without hope
inside rolls the blood and emptiness of fifty years
so this music sounds so distant
so deep and low, as if there is no sky above
so unsettled and tense, like the bones that dance in bodies
so the silence of the living is deeper than the dead's
so, from the start, the shooting never makes a sound

A shooting without sound without shape is a collector's item
its invisible body surreptitious like Russia
an unfathomable face sometimes leaders sometimes people
but people and a leader are just words
coming out of books they run absolutely wild
if seen, your eyes become bullet holes
all Russians have been shot enmass
waiting to be shot is a way of living

A truly terrible shooting does not launch a bullet
it just aims
like a prearranged plot it never dispels
sometimes it comes out of the dead, on their
bodies piled up high like a stage, performing the impromptu nature of death
the looks of those who return alive fall all around
like snow scattering on the ground confusing sad thoughts
at other times it peeps into your soul
enters your heart to hollow it out or smash it
goes into food and the air to clean out lungs
enters the light and exterminates the burning exiled shadows

The shooters shoot in the name of eternal life
so the time that is shot does not die

Forever a shooting awaits him
beyond us he suffers an unending death
becomes our body-double

Girls Out of School [放学的女孩]

A local afternoon, a stretch of street is splitting
an affected school turns belly up
like a fish vomiting roe and algae
lots of water, but not enough air

How to explain those girls let out of school who never wilt
under the sun an eye-catching patch
in a perfectly clear way they pass out of form
shoulder to shoulder lanterns of sleeves
left and right
hands joined, justifying themselves

They are born as their own daughters
a suitable age does not need proving
they are in love with their fathers
from the interior of virtue they issue high-pitched laughter
the mothers' defeat reflected on their faces
a physiognomy laid over by dark clouds
for an hour, an overcast sky knit into a sweater

In transit to a careless get-up
they seem similar and take names that change
hide in textbooks opened only once
they change knowledge into illusion
change into a weird mirror only shining on the old and the dead
everyday when they are let out they walk by the life of man
they casually eat things
ask the state for cash
and pare down adults with a revolving penknife
they play like this, every year growing up one day

Between Chinese and English [汉英之间]

I reside in a pile of character parts,
between the casual looks of this and that form.
They stand alone and penetrate, limbs rocking and unsteady,
a monotonous beat like shots from a gun.
After a wave of sound, Chinese characters grow simple.
Some arms, legs, eyes fall away,
but words still move on, stretch out, and see.
That kind of mystery raises a hunger.
Moreover, it left behind many delicious days,
let me and my race eat it, pick over it together.
In the accent of this place, in a local dialect gathered up like a crystal,
in classical and modern Chinese mixed into one speech,
the figure of my mouth is a circular ruin,
teeth sink into an open space
and do not collide with a bone.
With this kind of vista, this kind of flesh, Chinese feasts over the land.
I finished eating my portion of days, then ate the ancient's, until

one evening, I go to stroll on the English Corner, and see
a crowd of Chinese round a Yank, I surmise they
want to move into English. But English has no territory in China.
It is merely a class, a form of conversation, a TV program,
in university a department, tests and paper.
On the paper I feel the strong likeness of a Chinese to a pencil.
Light strokes and vague outlines, the life of a worn eraser.
Having experienced too much ink, glasses, typewriters
and the weightiness of lead,
relaxed and smooth, English rolls up on a corner in China.
It accustoms us to abbreviations and diplomatic language,
also western food, forks and knives, Aspirin.
This type of change does not involve the nose
and skin. Like a daily morning tooth brush
English moves over the teeth, making Chinese white.
Once I ate books ate the dead, therefore

everyday I brush my teeth. This concerns water, hygiene and contrast.
This produced a feeling for the mouth, a taste for speech,
and the many differences in the language of everyday use.
It also relates to a hand: it stretches into English,
the middle and index fingers spread apart, simulating
a letter, a victory, a kind of fascist experience of yourself.
A cigarette drops to the ground, extinguished when only half smoked,

like a part of history. History is a war that suffers
from a stutter, earlier it was the Third Reich, it was Hitler.
I do not know if this madman shot English, shot
Shakespeare and Keats.

But I do know in the Oxford dictionary there is the English of the nobility,
also the English of Churchill and Roosevelt armed to the teeth,
its metaphors, its objective reality, its aesthetic of destruction,
exploded at Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

In Japanese I see piles of Chinese characters become corpses –
but beyond language, China and England-America make a pact.
I read this part of history, and feel very suspicious.
Between history and me I do not know which is more preposterous.

More than one hundred years. Between Chinese and English, what actually happened?
Why do so many Chinese migrate into English,
work hard to become white people of a yellow race, and see the Chinese language
as a divorced wife, see it as a home in a broken mirror? What
actually happened? I live alone secluded in Chinese,
in dialogue with a great many paper people, daydreaming of English,
and see even more Chinese climbing up into it,
changing from a person of pictographic likeness to a phonetic linker of sound.

The Glass Factory [玻璃工厂]

1

From sight to sight, between is only glass.
From face to face
separation is invisible.
In glass, matter is not transparent.
The whole glass factory is a huge eyeball,
in it labor is the blackest part,
its day flashes at the core of things.
Things adhere to the very first tear,
like a bird in a stretch of pure light sticks to its shadow.
In the way of darkness you take in rays of light, then make them tribute.
In a place where glass is everywhere,
already glass is not itself, but is
a kind of spirit.
As if everywhere there is air, air is nearly nonexistent.

2

In the neighborhood of the factory is a large sea.
Knowledge of water is knowledge of glass.
Solidified, cold, fragile,
these are all the price of translucence.
Transparency is a mysterious visible language of waves,
when I say it I have already separated from it,
separated from the cup, the tea stand, the dresser mirror, all this
concrete matter produced on an assembly line.
But I am also situated in a siege of matter,
life is filled by desires.
Language leaks out, dries up, before light penetrates.
Language is to soar, is
openness facing openness, lightning against lightning.
So much sky is beyond the body of birds in flight,
and the reflection of an isolated island
may be the gentle scratch of light on the sea.
Whatever cuts across glass is lighter than a shadow,
deeper than an incision, harder to exceed than the blade of a knife.
A crack is nowhere to be seen.

3

I came, I saw, I spoke.
Language and time all muddy, dirt and sand all descend,
a patch of blindness spreads out from the core.
The same experience also occurs in glass.
The breath of flames, the heart of fire.
So-called glass is water altering attitude within flames,
is two types of spirit coming across each other,
two forms of destruction entering the same eternal life.
Growing into a frosty subzero combustion,
like a truism or a feeling,
obvious, clear, refusing to flow.
In fruit, in the depths of the sea, water has never run.

4

So this is the glass I see –
still a stone, but no longer solid.
Still a flame, but never again warm.
Still water, but never soft nor passing on.
It is a wound but never bleeds,
it is a sound but never passes through silence.
From loss to loss: this is glass.
Language and time are transparent,
we pay a high price.

5

In the same plant I see three kinds of glass:
In material, decorative, and symbolic state.
People tell me the father of glass is a chaos of stone.
In the void of stone, death is not the end,
but a changeable primeval fact.
Stone is smashed, glass is born.
This is real. But there is another truth
leading me into another state: from height to height.
Within that truth glass is merely water, already is
or just becoming hard, has bone, water that cannot be spilled,
and flame is a bone-piercing cold,
moreover the most beautiful is also the most fragile.
All that is sublime in the world, and
the tears of things.

An Apple Tree in Sunlight [阳光中的苹果树]

I do not want to spy on flesh and bones shot through with illusions,
let the black fruit scorch the afternoon,
ten minutes of falling leaves, before slicing it open.
I go, but I seem not to leave.

Silence, a far-off tree, and more distant sunlight.
Only a person with a shadow enters the water,
arms like waves rock the summer.
The day is ferocious and tilting.

Ripeness starts from the end of words,
until arid lips enter fruit,
and in a single night, they all fall.
Alive, awake, morose and carried away.

Everywhere a windless day and soft warmth.
Skin walks in July's inflammatory malady,
but the soul is not fervent.
Inside the soul the world is nothing.

Cut open from within, an aspect of memory.
Childhood is distance and vain fantasy.
We jump up, or climb many trees,
then all fruit are beyond reach.

Twenty years suspended, I lift my head.
Nothing compares to the sight of flames of water,
and placed inside it the insurmountable blade,
even prettier, even colder.

Wisdom's Dance of the Skeleton [智慧的骷髅之舞] Oct. 14, 1987

A solitary suitor, limited to conflict and harmony
turning its body but not turning
the silhouette close behind. This skeleton, a glorious dusk
in a burst of joyous shouts withers away for the sake of yesterday
hands clasped, in a high voice yelling the lie that kills
the innate fruit of evil, the weighty mortal body, with beauty for a basis
a more daring title flourishes in the broad daylight

Two secret bodies, idols of serious mien eye to eye
between them who is more frightening
who moves there, sneers, boasts, warns
a fierce arrival together with the truth
only the contours of a great man can shake a boast
all blood, that brain-ful of blood is all blood
and on the earth we boundlessly wander and drink

He arrived among us to make things boil
to make things grow old, to cry amid old things
such an honor! All new things are ancient
wisdom is the solitary suitor between old and new
contrary, antagonistic, the impossible possibility
body and soul both injured in defeat. The start of tears
a heavy snowfall renders the shimmering tears of no import

But who is the master of that wild thought and ornate diction
speaks with flames, smears lips with tulips
the body's search for a mate, the text's title of widow
possessing wealth but both hands empty
carrying hell on his back but walking in heaven
his sudden death is the whole world's
but who do we live for, and who lives for us

Among us who is more pitiful
who has shed his life leaving a body of hot blood
replacing the hunger of teeth with gold
the weather with an image a lover with an aesthetic
and love either burns or lasts
or for a promise to pass away puts aside an abyss
a large dual boundary, and that inescapable failing warmth

When he thirsts or dims
Pisces in a leaky eye governs us

its a piecemeal attitude, like the glint in a fish eye passed of as a pearl
When in the depth of the light's core he grows doubly dark
for our sold-out souls we flourish our flesh
When he sings, we who can not dance
are yet wild with joy for the old days, and bitterly mourn, and our gloomy tears fall

Seawater Bites Deepest to the Bone [最刺骨的火焰是海水]

The sea falls into the sun, leaving just one drop
the heart of a spot of water falls into the eye of a flame
in a frenzy to ascend to heaven it sprinkles tears everywhere
and for the light it carves a darkness that can be struck
has an invisible pair of hands carry off a village
leaves behind a solitary city and an even lonelier crowd
of roses there is only one, nearly not a rose
this will carry a nip in the air to its future burning
a season of falling flowers, our years like flowers
and we did not shoot it away. Children net big dead fish with their eyes
shoot the sun with water guns. The sea is alongside
forever shivering on dark tanned skin
seawater is the flame that bites deepest to the bone

The Beauty [美人] Feb. 27, 1988

This is the night of weak bones for all things,
the feeblest billow in the sleep of the earth.
She lowers her head to conceal the face of the water,
behind her lashes, the water deepens the pain.

This is the first night of her falling on the water,
the hidden moon icy clear jade.
We see a fashionable rubbed-up pallor
burn her brow, a patch of cover!

The unpolished grain of a piano,
stirs up weather as thin as silk.
Does she see the first snow as arrogance,
see teardrops as shimmering with the help of imperial crowns?

Her lyrical hands carry to us dreams that sooth the soul.
The whole night floating in an inverted image and reflected light
all the more dark, to us her eyes are too bright.
For this night, we will be blind for life.

But then her beauty does not make us uglier.
She coldly smiles, yet my hot tears flow.
All people have been beautifully alive,
then reminisce and sorrow, over beauty's unbounded decline.

The Hand Gun [手枪]

A handgun can be taken to pieces
broken into two unrelated things
one the hand, one the gun
a gun grown long can become a clique
a hand painted black another

And the things themselves can be further pulled apart
until they grow in contrary directions
in the endless deconstruction of words the world segregates

With one eye people look for love
the other presses into the barrel of a gun
bullets make eyes at each other
your nose aims at the enemy's living room
politics incline to the left
one person shoots at the east
another falls in the west

The black-hand gang puts on white gloves
the party of rifles changes to short guns
immortal Venus stands in stone
her hands reject mankind
from her chest you pull out two drawers
inside are two bullets, one gun
that becomes a toy when you pull the trigger
Murder, a dummy round

Selections from **The Final Mirage** [最后的幻想] A series of 12 poems, Nov.-Dec. 1988

#1. **A Strawberry** [草莓] Nov. 6, 1988

If a strawberry is burning, she will be the junior sister of snow.
She touches the lips but has another love.
Before the strawberry was given, nobody told me if it had vanished.
My lifelong stroll starts from a strawberry.
A pack of children wildly race against the wind in a fresh red idea,
when they are weary, they unintentionally turn back
-- so beautiful and desolate a moment!

Then I was young, a mouthful of strawberries.
The green grassland I have long forgotten,
the tiny tear I will let fall but yet have not,
a boy, entangled in parents, once wept beneath the sky.
I turn back into a black cloud, so that he can not see.
The solitude of two is only half of it.
Can first love be passed on by a strawberry?

A childhood giddiness persists till today.
when the moon fills the breast, lovers grow purple.
This is not a lyrical age,
strawberries are only a speed from teeth to flesh,
O, old dream that will never come home again,
who will hear my dirge of limitless pity?

#4. Blackbirds [黑鸦] Nov3, 1988

Happiness is dismal, perplexed by phantoms.
Wind, a masterpiece that surrounds the body.
So many faces fall, and autumn has such deep feeling,
past in a flash, the evening sun on your forehead,
first a sheet of pain, then it cools, vanishes,
it is the ultimate love blacker than these.

But then in our lives there has never been a true black night.
In daylight, the sun pours out blackbirds,
happiness is gloomy, when the moon falls on a knife blade,
when our limbs are sprinkled like tears on yesterday
repeatedly freezing. In the rooms fires and air burn,
the living room slides down from your shoulder,
guests sit down in the embrace of blackbirds.
Each blackbird brings us two kinds of warmth.
And these words to love: if there is still time to speak of it.

We have never seen more beauty than that in a blackbird.
A naked woman burns from midnight until the sky is bright.

#11. Butterflies [蝴蝶] Dec. 19, 1988

A butterfly, a fire of self-pity unrelated to us.
A huge nothingness comes from this petite figure,
a piteous plea, without power.
You dream of breaking free from the butterfly,
but the butterfly is itself a dream, deeper than your dream.

Your secret solitude begins with the loss of a brooch.
Once it was pinned to your chest, so when the lanterns are first hung
you can hear warm words, reread old letters.
You do not remember the appearance of the letter-writers. Among them

is there somebody dying at the speed of writing,
going in at the speed of a pin? At night you read letters,
the brooch is already lost. A butterfly
first a portent of flying away, then a return,
carrying the inexplicable substance of the body.
Wanting to shake off matter by way of butterflies is futile.
Matter is absolute, there is no forgotten surface.

A butterfly is love just so long as one day,
if the night is added, it will reduce to a kiss.
You have never learned which of the two is briefer:
Your life, or the day and the night of a butterfly?
A butterfly is too beautiful, but instead appears cruel.

#10. First Snow [初雪] Dec. 14, 1988

Before the snowfall there was the sun's bright gaze.
I looked back to see my home fall down in a fruit,
the grain of the earth burns onto my body.
A beauty that shatters jade and places is deep hidden, secretly loved.

Shift to another summer. Before I move
already I am stiff, my features stagnant,
then before the sky, the snow falls.
The bare smell of plants moves submerged through the day,
carrying my daily fantasy, a pale flame, a book of fire.
Watching snow fall is a kindness and a sorrow such as this,
moreover, the snowfall is so marvelous!
Who treads on snow there, for a lifetime never comes home?

Before walking on snow, I am heard by another name.
A windstorm rolls up a flock of sheep blows past my cheeks,
but I am entirely unaware.
one day in my life is forever snowing,
forever there is a forgetting of which the world cannot be told,
there, the sunlight feels the cold that comes with life.
O first snow, forgetting, like a vast unknowable beauty.
How is it that the first snow is slow to fall?
Before the snowfall, nothing is white.

#12. Books [书卷] Dec. 29, 1988

Daylight, the sinking of eyes,
words and light hide inside your body.
An extended hand, makes perception linger or drop.
Close your eyes decisively,
for those books you have read or will read.

When the rays of light gather on a head darkened by ashes,
the books in my breast are so high it snows, the field of vision all mist.
That kind of wisdom is obviously a bit of a swoon.
The day has no outward form, but will hide in my body.
If my eyes have not shut,
who is full like a word but does not speak?

Always I read, draped in flame or hunger.
Hunger is fire's food, fire is the tongue of snow.
I see the mirror and the study facing me,
in the shape of scissors birds in flight spread across the sky.
Reading is to place rays of light under scissors.
Tell the drawers of water, the gods are thirsty,
knowledge is burning, like queer fashionable clothes.
A tight-fitting age, who is nude like the emperor?

Selections from **The Fast Food Restaurant** [快餐馆],
a sequence of 10 poems. (March 1989)

#3

A crowd of customers walks up the street carrying homes like birdcages,
the restaurant hangs alone at the height of colloquial speech.
A generation physically in possession of both parents, the lips equally divided between
two bodies. Rumors and prices, this rising that falling
enter the trifles and uncertainty of a low sky and cool wind.
So much nutrition it resembles mist, like rays of light that drag in shadows.
Age passes through a skirt, gently raised to the waist
when walking slow or sitting still it hangs down, courtesy raises creases.
The wind exposes in specific things the mental state of middle age,
clearly bares suddenly fallen motions and teeth marks.
This is noon, sunlight drops straight down to a standstill,
crowds of customers hem in a housewife hiding in her sex,
her skirt swirls like a flame.

#5

All the meaning of civilization is in prefabrication and collocation.
We are informed the death of our diet is preordained,
irreversible, it sustains life
and time, and the tenses of verbs are mixed into the recipe.
The organs of animals and quiet blood, when the knife stabs the heart
the body's scream, protein and fat, all of these
arranged together. Forgetfulness and digestion indivisibly unite.
To forget is to read, so digestion contaminates sight.
I cannot differentiate speaking and writing, they
are not glass, but in the way of glass
when blocking space they tolerate the field of vision.
Vocabulary hangs down like a curtain, the room's atmosphere
spreads over my face, dark and moving, but not flashy.
Let me throw off those premature, willfully arranged
compound senses of words, see the true environment of my writing and diet,
reading materials, structures, and the civilized people who pass between.

#8

So connect the limbs of people to an electric current, let them experience speed, origins, the power of heat and anesthesia. Add some ice to their beer. A manmade modern winter, is only an hour of a high-voltage power flow. Taken together how many of these types of winters can prevent the old man of summer from spilling like suds? A locomotive is passing through the ice and faces in the glass, so many shuddering objects of concatenation, reality is cut away from all this by a dinner knife, or cast into false teeth. Summer is the season of travel, yet winter implies only old age remains yet to be conquered. Are we really able to conquer old age? Can those antibiotics ameliorate time, change the costly summer season into a slow moving green spring? Can the world freeze? When aging and growth in turn appear on the inside of your diet, an ice cube, an hour of high-voltage winter, are too frenzied. We are informed that the death of the body is preordained. A person who is dying everyday still has what thing that can really die? Death has always been an arrogance, just like the old age we have not the strength to reach.

From **1989, To My Friends** [1989, 致友人], a group of 9 poems. (Sept.-Oct. 1989)

Stand Firm [确立] -- for Chen Dongdong, Sept. 17, 1989

Out of sleep and into water. Drops of water fill the afternoon.
From this I think of the ocean at rest.
Children racing the tide, wanting to sun bathe.
In the pieced-together light they wobble and bend.

Bare-headed they enter a razor
thinking the blade's edge does not touch the afternoon.
I think their growth is very perilous.
Out of my sleep and into a trance, a stretch of indulgence.

Deferred, the children's one and only afternoon
grows like this, swaying, without a bone.
Wobbling is beautiful, but it's hard to establish character.
The children mediate between bald heads and a razor.

Since the dispersed afternoon is not standing,
and the firm stand required for growth was never truly established,
so, before going back to growing,
return to a piece of land where you can kneel or lie down.

No matter how unfathomable the source of the afternoon,
it is only inevitable to those who sit still for life.
Silently sit and write, and so establish the necessary kingdom.
Then even man-children will be ruled by chance.

Love in the Time of the Planned Economy [计划经济时代的爱情]

In the end fads will find favor with those
who scorn them. Not one but
a swarm of officials with children like clouds, leisurely walk down
the marble staircase, the flashlight's pillar of light
stands straight up: the false climb between
two legs. Deftly the female secretary pulls out
the metal plug of an electric appliance, and does not
insert it again.

Soft, hollow plastic pipes between the yin and the yang,
tightly wrap one hundred distinct
strands of hair knotted now but loose spread at the start. After the
electro-silvering has faded, the secretary says to the officials'
many underlings: every second provide
three thousand cubic meters of flow discharge
install one hundred reductor switches.

The hard softens, the old
get even older. In the black night climb up
following a faint pillar of light --
coins, paper money, your family's water bill,
the savings of a lifetime like flames at river bottom.

An official must pass through a hundred bedrooms
before he can enter, like a water reservoir rising to lip's edge, the so peaceful
sleep of his wife. A phone recording
passes on the receptacle-laden voice of the secretary.
Water in one tube,
flows out of a hundred. Love
is the equal distribution of accumulated funds, is a towering fountain
in a flower garden in the center of the street, is the secret switch
to a neglected imperial harem in feudal times: the fuse wire is broken.

Tsvetaeva [茨维塔耶娃]

Three tangerines carrying love race between brittle branches.
A Russian horse carriage with two vacated seats, halted in thick fog
like the ears of a rabbit diverging from the face's place.
The breast bared, no true brooch.
A flower garden on the head like an avalanche, in the evening
when the wind blows up I see people wearing red mountaineering clothes
blow by across the mountainside clutching the fallen sun.
The summit is behind the roof, not very far off.

A short saw. At the wedding ceremony
the groom mysteriously vanishes, the bride surrounded by a crowd
wears an imitation necklace and gold bracelets.
I do not believe she will grow to twenty-one,
she pretends not to know all the things she already knows.
Three tangerines of love, she can only get one.
Perhaps even less than one: the tangerine is split in two,
it is made of wax.

The Reading Room [阅览室] April 12, 1990

In this public reading room, through the depths of our field of vision,
we exchange the glasses of aging eyes for a pair of gloves
and a top hat not worn for years,
thereby retrieving the shy portrait of a childhood head
a quality that is spared baldness. Nobody can
pull it back, and nobody admits
the reading room of the elderly is a mistake to the new generation.

This is a sublimely brilliant error,
this is a reading room of dim old eyes.
Like a cap its roof is conveniently lifted off,
exposing many strange heads,
and amid all these heads we are the youngest.
The reading room in the head,
you search for a secret body for yourself,
a body of the times that is everywhere,
the body of a dictionary, the body of a dossier or a legal clause.

No one can search, and no one can
find. A reading room where all eyes are blind
behind glasses flashes the jumpy words of a diplomat.
The world behind the glasses is taboo to us,
it passes through to a pair of gloves put on by chance,
not to flip through books, not to touch a thing.
In the gloves there are no hands,
behind the glasses no eyes,
and under the hat no head.
Are all these still on our bodies,
this head, these eyes, these hands?

A mistake repeated over many years,
a reading room that cannot be left,
passes through the dim essence of our age,
through the billowing black clouds in our hearts,
through plugged ears, aching teeth, dizzy heads,
and through a severely nearsighted passage,
arriving among the commands and the march of the dead.

An error foretold,
a reading room built of all houses.
No one could assert it, no one could
think it. The reading room is the living room, the kitchen, the bedroom,

it is the shopping center, the nursery, the morgue.
The hat is the ceiling. The gloves are a sculpture.
The glasses are the reservoirs of the face, linked double moons.
A steel girder is a bone. A bookshelf is the gallows.
A philosopher is a spy or a butcher.
The head is a philosopher,
eyes are spies,
the hand is a butcher.
Paper is a box on the ear. Words are lead pellets! A ray of light is the rope!

Although reasons are as abundant as light in the room,
yet we have no reason to leave the reading room.
Located within it we read a book --
a book of sand, a book of lost souls, the book of books,
a book within which all books are annihilated.

The Mark of the Leopard [豹微] May 5, 1990

The roar of a leopard startles a flock of sheep
it lightens the tremors in the echo
to a wound as tenuous as a cicada's wing
and its unbridled limbs are steeped in its voice
it pays no heed to whether on the ground by its ear
there is a noisily gasping lamb

The leopard roars in the insignia of people
its forehead is broader than previous anger
yet it does not follow the setting sun and roll among the sheep
the stacked clouds on the bodies of sheep
sweep the leopard into the ranks of rulers
but it is already tired of the chase
This is like the wild wind and driving rain in the depths of night
that is burnt red by fire that falls from the sky

A rare sight the people distantly see
like an imperial bloodline flashing on a frontal eminence
as if a roar aided by a flame of anger has been suppressed
lowered heads eating grass sheep live a peaceful life
people prick up sheep ears
listen to the distant leopard being sliced open by sheep horns
listen to the spotted leopard pelt that conceals summer

In its rage the leopard burns to ashes
its noble blood winnows through the bracken on the barren plain
brandishing a leopard tail people drive the flock of sheep
not knowing a crushed leopard skull is prettier
the leopard is a fever breaking out inside people
festering on the human chest
like an ugly wound or a badge
as if the shards in their tears are spouted out from the corner of an eye

Crossing the Square at Nightfall [傍晚穿过广场] Sept. 18, 1990

I do not know were a square of past ages
begins, or where it ends.
Some people take an hour to cross the square,
some a lifetime --
In the morning it's children, in the evening people in the dusk of life.
I don't know how much farther you must walk in the twilight before you can stop your steps?

In the twilight how long must you survey
before you can close your eyes? when a fast moving auto
opens its blinding lights
in the rearview mirror I saw the flash of the faces
of those who once crossed the square on a bright morning.
In the evening in buses they leave.

A place that no one leaves is not a square,
a place where no one falls is also not.
The departed come home again, but the fallen are forever fallen.
A thing called stone
quickly piles up, towers up,
unlike the growth of bones needing a hundred years time.
Also not so soft as a bone.
Every square has a head built up out of stone

making the empty-handed people feel the measure
of life. To look up and think with a huge head of stone,
not a simple matter for anyone.
The weight of stone
lightens the responsibility, the love and the sacrifice on people's shoulders.

Perhaps people will cross the square on a bright morning,
open arms and tenderly embrace in winds from every side.
But when the night falls, hands grow heavy,
the only body emitting light is the stone in the head.
The only keen sword that stabs at the head quietly drops to the ground.

Darkness and cold are rising.
Surrounding the square tall structures put on the latest fashion of china and glass.
All grows small. The world of stones
lightly floats up in the world reflected in the glass,
like an oppressive notion scrawled in children's workbooks
that at anytime can be ripped out and kneaded into a ball.

Cars speed past, pouring the speed
of running water into a huge system of concrete that possesses muscles and bones of iron,
in the shape of the horns bestowed on silence.
The square of past ages vanishes from the rearview mirror.

Disappears forever --
a square covered by acne in its green spring, in its first love.
A square that has never appeared in the accounts and notices of death.
A square that bares its chest, rolls up its sleeves, tightens its belt
that wears patches and energetically scrubs with both hands.

A square that through young blood runs outside its body,
that licks with its tongue, strikes stone with its brow, and covers itself with flags.

A square of daydreams that has vanished, no more exists,
stops in the morning as if there has been a night of heavy snow.
A pure and mysterious thaw
shimmers in turn in eyes and conscience,
a part grows into a thing called tears,
a part grows hard inside a thing called stone.

The world of stone collapses.
A world of soft tissue climbs up to the high spot.
The entire process like spring water leaving minerals through a draw pipe
going distilled into an airtight, beautifully packaged space
Riding an express elevator I rise in the umbrella stem of a rainy day.

When I return to the ground, I look up and see a circular restaurant
opened like an umbrella revolving in the city's sky.
This is a cap grown out of wizardry,
its size does not agree
with the head of the giant piled up out of stone

The arms that once supported the square are let down.
Today the giant relies on the support of a short sword.
Will it stab something? For example, a fragile revolution
that was once stirred up on paper, posted to walls?

There has never been a power
that could glue together for long two different worlds.
In the end a repeatedly posted head will be ripped away.
A repeatedly whitewashed wall
has a half occupied by a girl of mixed blood baring her thighs.
The other half is enticing ads for the installation of prosthetics and the regeneration of hair.

A pram quietly parks on the evening square,

silent, not related to this world soon to go mad.
I guess the distance between the pram and the setting sun
to be farther than a hundred years.
This is an almost limitless yardstick, sufficient to measure
the length of the confined era that passed over the square

The universal fear of house arrest
brought people off their perches to gather in the square
changed the lonely moments of a lifetime into a fervent holiday.
And in the depths of their dwellings, in the silent eye-catching ceremony of love and death,
a square of shadows empty without a sign of life is treasured,
like a tightly sealed room for penitence it is only a secret of the heart.

Must one pass through the darkness of the heart before crossing the square?
Now in the dark the two blackest worlds combine as one,
the hard stone head is split open,
in the dark keen swords flash.

If I could use the mysterious black night chopped in half
to explain a bright morning trampled to the ground by both feet –
if I could follow the flight of stairs swept by the dawn light
and climb up onto the shoulders of the giant standing high on the summit of nothingness,
not to rise, but to fall --
if the epigraph engraved in gold is not to be a eulogy,
but to be rubbed out, forgotten, trampled --

Just as a trampled square must fall on the head of the trampler,
those people who crossed the square on that bright morning,
sooner or later their black leather shoes will fall on sharp swords,
as heavily as the lid of a coffin must fall on the coffin.
As long as it is not me lying inside, and also not
the people walking on the blade of the sword.

I never thought so many people could cross the square
on that bright morning, dodging loneliness and immortality.
They are the survivors of an era of black confinement.
I never imagined they would leave or fall in the evening.

A place where nobody falls is not a square.
A place where nobody stands also is not.
Was I standing? How much longer must I stand?
All in all those who fell and me are the same,
we were never immortal.

The Season of a Full Moon [月圆时节]

A restricted influence, the lack greater than the surplus.
I must obey the halo of the moon that leaks but once
I see less and less of a response and pity
A lifetime of love less than one night. The blackest

Night: I do not know who's awake who asleep
The pressing waist of love limited
To a dream. A cat suspends its claws. When the mice
Press down from above, there's no need to remember to appear

In an unknowable kingdom mousetraps gleam
At dawn I see the fall of a sky full of food
It once buried a moon

I have never been told what that perfectly round radiance lacks
The mousetraps did not clip mice, the parts that grow into pure
Speculation are the most, one more than the whole

A Bottle of Ink [墨水瓶]

The remote winter that rises and falls on a paper face
the paper roof stirred up by a wild wind
exposes the ink-sucking head at the tip of the pen

If the pen tightens the pen's cap
I can only use a sharpened pencil to write
posing as the wind the daddy-long-legs of winter rapidly stirs
I saw the muddle of footprints that fell on the snow
and the sheet of white paper
between the ink and the eraser

The fastened cap of the pen, who twisted it open?
and with pencil has already written a contemptuous life
who dips into the ink and writes it again?

A covering. An endless covering
the steps I scatter through my life covered by bus stations and airports
the pretty faces that brush by overlaid by few stationary words
on earth the true but distant winter
covered by a man-made 220 volt winter
the green fields covered by a leaden roof

But when my lonely study falls onto a sheet of paper
covered by an apartment that drips down like ink
who then is the inclining bottle of ink?

Refusal [拒绝]

There is no need to hoard, no need
of a bumper crop. The fruit blown down by the wind,
the fish burnt red by the sun, the birds that strike
our foreheads, are enough for a lifetime.

There is no need to grow, no need
to be immortal. Days that come out from our bodies
blow over others that have returned
to the dirt. They gently breeze over tears
and cheeks, blow across rooves sunk in the waves.

And the warning that comes from our hearts is clenched
like a fist, brandished over our heads. There is no need
to cogitate, no need to obey.
When knife blades roll up our innocent tongues,
when truth is as hard to bear and to swallow
as a stomach ache, there is no need for an appeal.
No need to shuttle between loudspeakers that arrive with a screech.

There is no need to promise, no need
of eulogy. The loudspeaker of words is a threat
to the world. It threatens material ears,
and in the ear it plots, pulls out the bonds of matter
in the ear, making it tremble,
making it weak and powerless in the sound
of the enraged rebuke of nerves. There is no need to be strong.

There is also no need of praise under another name
or of curses, no need to bear it in mind.
one heart will cease beating in the hearts of all,
in the bones where power is gathered it will
mould its own blood. And there is no need
to punish the body with the few bones that are left.

There is also no need to pardon, and no need
to pity. The drifter will always drift,
the planter will not harvest a grain. There is no need
to make offerings, no need of gain.

The planter sees his alkaline wife as maize.
When hunger like a whip abruptly falls,
there is no need to flog the corn of conscience,

of to search for a tear for the corn,
or the seed of a rose. There is no need
to exchange our hunger for our son in the corn,
and then watch him betray his bloodline.

Dinner [晚餐]

After the spice hits
the wind, the food entering the flames does not
go into pig iron. At pot's bottom the snow gathered over the years
rises from my finger tips to my head, dinner
stretches out all the way into my dusk.

Never again
can there be dawn. Last night in a candlelit
roadside diner, I had a double order of cabbage, spinach,
raw fish-sticks and sausage. The beer suds
hung in the air. After
clearing up the bill, a handmade ivory toothpick
between my loose teeth, slowly stirred in the depths
of solar eclipse of time. Never again to be dawn.
Late at night the noon news is rebroadcast,
in it there is an obit: The dead died
a second time.

A brief stare, a gentle retelling,
for those who have been listening and staring
at me for a long time now. I have already paid the bill for the lost soul.

Never again
will there be dawn, but also no more black night.

Spring [春天]

Just as a rose is reddest amid all fresh blood,
it will also grow blacker in a black wound,
stopping the world from rising high on your left arm
or hanging down, because what's clenched in your hand is not spring.

Just as a flame grows whiter in white terror,
it will also shine green in the eyes of the dying,
not because of hatred, but for love,
the springtime love sunk in the flesh like the claws of a wolf:

A spring of tightly sealed lips and clenched teeth,
the hiss of a venomous snake is spit from the tip of your tongue,
shadows of death pass through wolf lungs
twisted tight, shaken in upright blood.

The spring wound round our neck is a poisonous snake,
the spring that leaps into our embrace is a pack of hungry wolves.
Like a drowning man saved and thrown into a fire,
spring gives to love the power for blood to flow.

Wearing the moon the snake darts out from the flames,
bearing love the wolf falls in a rose bush.
This is not the fault of lovers, nor
that of the immortals imposed over our heads.

The evil in the heart of man grows up with all things,
it plunges roots into a place the dead can see.
There, the heart sees farther than the eye,
like the smoke that puffs up, your hands are inhaled into nostrils.

A person cannot warm frozen hands on a rose,
although roses and flames answer a similar call,
among the mass of left arms raised in salute that transmits
the annual blossoming, the yearly conflagration.

Neither can a person cool singed lips on a flame,
although a flame becomes water faster than a lover,
rising up into the coldest kiss of kisses,
the yearly selection, the annual annihilation.

A Daytime Beauty [白日美人] Nov. 14, 1992

After noon from the tongue the ocean reaches the flower garden.
In the shape of a black cloud the sea twice opens its tongue,
like blossoms rapidly returning to the start of leaf's fall,
like the fields that flood rooves seen at a distance.

From nearby you look at me, why
not move off a bit, as far as you can see all round in this scene the sea
lifts up its silk under things, I have already bared
a bumper crop of breasts, but you see nothing.
At this moment as if ironed the sea grows still
like a mirror, a surface endowed with the depth of forgetfulness.

Close against my face the sea casts down its sand
and caverns, its dense beard pierces my heart,
in a puff of held breath its ashes like tears cannot be checked,
like musk released into the lungs, spreading its limbs.
Let the world's water be gathered in one place,
water: so gentle an old age.

But you know I am still young, the other summer in my body
ferociously gusts. In a night retreating from the night
does not mean the day will die away over a greater expanse.
This is the moment to signal love, from a place three meters from a dreamland the sea
recedes, the boats in the dream are only paper-cuts.
Out of past affairs you try to place a call to me,
a brief conversation, perhaps it can be put off into the hereafter?

I have yielded to temptation because I myself am temptation.
The sea pulls back its tongues that touch like lightning,
as the grogginess of an afternoon releases black clouds from a lightning bolt.
I am the daylight beauty, the night is my father,
but before going into the night you are gentle.
Only a gentle person can understand the sweetness of night,
the night: a splendid sea on one hundred feet of film.

We possessed such a loving
unwake-able night. The sea's sustained arrival
already become snow, become the flames of an arid virgin.
The sea calls out from its deep deep throat,
but the listening of former days has already turned to the next life.
The sea passes through a keyhole and makes it impossible to close my mouth,
and in the night's mysterious bedroom two keys turn.

In the midair flower garden of the night there are no stairs to the throne,
during the day I am empress, at night a person alone.

My night is prettier than my day.

In an Elevator [电梯中] Feb. 7, 1993

The elevator is about to descend, an apple is passed over
as a supplement for the imagination. First struggle out from the crowd
then you can come in. Too early if going to work,
the apple is still on the tree, like the new generation refusing to grow up.

When the elevator went down you thought they would stay in the air?
If you are late for work, then just be a little later.
The implication of taking your shift is two seats tight together
swapping luck and number plates.

Power has a face pasted on with glue,
from it I smell the odor of chemical change.
The way you cry it seems you are faking it,
do you really believe tears have no bones?

Take your daughter, a beauty parlor
can dispose of the beauty incessantly growing on her pretty face.
But what remains still grows, aging is only
beauty trembling as it grows more beautiful.

All this can only be explained from the heart.
The entire city lands on your body, goes beyond
the limits of heart illness. Why today?
The apple abruptly falls, the elevator has no time to descend.

The Homeland of an Alien [异乡人的故乡] April 21, 1993

The alien walks toward dawn from the little that is left of his nude body,
this is only a process of dressing that will return him to the previous night.
When a provisional breakfast lies between us,
we see the lively square at noon rising up with an elevator,
the kitchen withdraws from the living room, and behind the frame of the glasses
look for eyes of a belted baroque design.

This is America. In a frying pan with a tongue of flame the sturgeon
makes public the smells of fruit jam and onions, if we
have already forgotten the origin of grapes. The light
and the heavy, two kinds of sound written and face-to-face
win similar ears from an assembly. The alien vanishes,
his outer appearance of granite, and a heart unknown to man.

In the place where his head will finally fall, a cobbler
saws off his legs, and a teacher
smashes his glasses, burns the textbooks of a lifetime –
I imagine the cobbler opening his toolbox, his eyes
tightly fixed on a butterfly on a shoe tip. I imagine
an elderly professor facing his students bearing a hopeless love.

I imagine Hurley. In a law office
in Oklahoma he ponders the ancient lost soul of the Orient.
Mr. Ambassador: I imagine a mysterious abrogation
of Whitman's open spirit. From thirty years of prohibition
Americans learned the temporal quality of strong Chinese spirits. The flesh does not exist,
the homeland I touch revolves round a single alien.

Hamlet [哈姆雷特] Dec. 18, 1994

Staying long in one character you will seem isolated.
But this is only a ghost, the breathing behind the mask,
he hears too much in the sound of applause from everyplace,
although the ever more tranquil sky raises not the slightest wave.

He arrives at the center of the stage and all the lights go on.
From start to finish the darkness of his heart is a mystery to us.
Elderly people not in a mirror still age,
and among the old he who ages is such a pretty youth!

Beauty compels him to defend his isolation,
especially that beauty hastened on by his organs.
Close behind beauty the march of the usurper is quickened,
does a dead man trample him on us?

As to death, a person can only try to live as if it is morning.
(If flowers can try to blossom like an avalanche.)
The huge palace orchestra and rosemary's lawyers of leaves
entwine, his voice recovers its former weariness.

A rainstorm, like a sieve and a vortex, grows smaller and smaller,
its confluence exposes the rotten foundation of an empire,
like a variant form of Pisces it climbs up to the high point of a sword blade,
it never blew over the heads where the autumn wind rustles beyond the stage.

The scenery surrounding the stage carries the fictitious nature of pure flesh.
From this onlookers obtain an anger that cannot be played out,
when a youth among dead men lashes like a whip,
when he passes through a bloody spectacle it transforms into torrents of hot tears.

And we also will forever, uncontrollably wail.
To the power of dead men suddenly evoked on our bodies,
the grasslands under the sky are so tranquil,
the man strolling there is so happy, so stupid.

Our Sleep, Our Hunger [我们的睡眠，我们的饥饿]

A sequence of 13 poems, March 7, 1995

#1

Stylishly slavering the banquet rises.
In the sky the waiters stand the entire night,
no stairway to go down.
The feeble candlelight climbs up alone.
That kind of height obviously does not suit you
when you try to look on happiness from a higher hunger.
Happiness is just a lowly wind blowing by your ear,
you must bend down to hear it.

#2

Shadows lower themselves lower than banquets
and wait for the leopard to appear. The leopard's hunger
is a spiritual peril,
possessing the vast textual space of a clan chronicle,
but not preserving the marks of sawtooth mastication;
no digestion, no defecation,
expressing regret for food
and a tendency to obsessive spiritual purity.

#3

No need of a sky for a bat to appear.
Bat close on bat flies by --
this masked, mongrel flight,
a face transformed from a rat,
but the other body parts
are identical to the birds' we see in the daylight.
Bats smear the sunlight on a negative, deepening
our reliance on sleep and the night.

#4

Asleep you invent birds in flight,
beautiful bird calls, pure white
loose feathers. But they are only

official ways of talking about flight.
A bat has no daytime residence,
its visibility lower than a candle.
Blow out your candle, let the night grow dark.

#5

Sleep screens sleep like a bat draws in its wings.
You stay in the original spot, getting up and leaving
is the leopard knocking at the door a thousand miles away,
its hunger is the hunger of a prison,
the gate to freedom opens toward weapons.
The sky of the bat vanishes at dawn,
leaves the earth with insomnia carved deep,
polishes the bright key in the depths of darkness.

#6

As you fall asleep you hear a mysterious knock on the door.
It is the dead who knock: what do they want?
Between two real states there is no door to open.
Abruptly you take off your shoes and exchange footprints with the leopard,
take off your glasses and give them to the bat,
and also pull out your heartsick cash for the dead to spend.
When you wake you discover chains
that grow into your flesh like the exquisite spots on a leopard.

#7

A man standing alone on the earth
is weightily pressed down by the people lying in the sky.
The bodies lying down are all somewhat alike,
difference like the fur of other animals
gleams in your sleep. A woolen blanket
falls from the sky, burns your lucky night,
but the earth has no bed for you to lie in,
there is no need of your wish to sleep in the sky.

#8

For many years now, we have waited for a dinner in the sky.
Latecomers walk up by an old style

staircase, but there are no chairs to sit in.
To us what is a gathering of various foods,
to a leopard is but one, an elitist banquet:
When you order you must use the difficult language of a leopard.
This is real hunger: you almost
cannot sense the hunger, unless you spice it with some beastliness.

#9

The food pithily ascends, nobody knows
how much salt you add to your dinner,
this is the secret of life.
Why do we feel thirsty at night?
After drinking all the world's water, we drink the sky's.
The rain that falls all night needs a throat and eyes
to preserve it, needs a faucet to twist tight,
gentle and fine it runs to the heart of shame.

#10

Water collected in one place can not be spilled.
Seawater overflows but our cisterns and cups
are still empty. Look at this stretch of sea
how can it care if a body full of water contains metal
or rotten wood. Do not hope that boundless happiness
can keep a little happiness for you,
as little as a black filling in a rotten tooth,
and you will hit on an age-old pain.

#11

A leopard with a toothache: no matter how it catches and eats its food,
its vast stomach spreads like the sound of applause.
But all this is purely a product of our heads,
an advanced form of violence carried out in an action against the soul,
it seems hunger is an ancient art,
its face is the ever unchanging
face of time: food is its mirror.
And we, making a crutch of our aging, live till today.

#12

A bat's night is a white painting turned upside down.
In that type of darkness you can see very far,
return to the light and you will sadly go blind.
The light on the bat's body is already blind,
it opens human eyes
and regards itself, vision dodges into another kind of nature.
As a bird a rat flies,
but the bird in the nature of the rat has lost its sky.

#13

If you attend the dinner, it is sure to be in the sky.
A pair of hands push down the power switch making the garden quietly rise.
But are our hunger and sleep so high?
When a leopard endures harvest and distribution
like grain, when a bat on the wall turns white.
Last night's rain is the sunlight in which we remotely bathed.
The first spiritual transport of the sun is a candle,
illuminating our bedrooms and our kitchens.