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Drifter in the North: Four Poems

Translated from the Chinese by Lucas Klein

To Rumi

Back country in the dervish's rucksack,
in a square at the center of town,
pockets shaken out.
Of these billions shaken out of the air,
all that's left is a single clenched coin.
Lifting the dormant owl-like felt hat on his head,
the more rice he begs, the more the dust in his stomach.
A slice of something split in half by words,
too late to be grilled into toast, it's already been made a miracle.
Please try to comprehend the honor of hunger
not from what you eat, but from what you don't.
(A grilled fish will speak the language of water.)
The dervish reveres water like a god, braving waves to come to China,
with an empty bowl and an emptier stomach
from pen to farm implements, passing to my hands.
A small cultivated plot shrinks the greatness of the desert.
I'm no farmer, but I'm becoming one.
With manual labor, put down your thinking.
Digging down with this hoe
harms Sufi arteries and lightning,
the rolling thunder of petroleum never to be plugged again.
How much corn has begun to grow, the desert to recede,
After how many grassland empires have begun to fracture.
The Arabian prince needs a little shame to examine himself,
Asia Minor needs dignity to preserve its minority,
the angels need a touch of anger so they can keep calm.

Digging down with this hoe it's not all harvest,
(no need for a bumper crop, enough to eat is good enough.)
but below deep digging the earth has been dug through,
and the sky escapes through a cavern of light,
constellations like the blind staring at the face of song.
Words return to the source, gold kneels and does not rise.
Matter's more benevolent, even the small crime of making matter
forgives the greater crime of material desire.
Ultimate goodness never worries about the common good,
nor does it care about bad faith goodness looking back and laughing.
Because in the face of holy begging,
the dervish has vanished from the crowd.
Without him, all the bowls in everyone's hands are empty.

(October 18, 2013, Shanghai)

致鲁米

托钵僧行囊里的穷乡僻壤，
在闹市中心的广场上，
兜底抖了出来。
这凭空抖出的亿万财富，
仅剩一枚攥紧的硬币。
他揭下头上那顶睡泉般的毡帽，
讨来的饭越多，胃里的尘土也越多。
一小片从词语掰下的东西，
还来不及烤成面包，就已成神迹。
请不要以吃什么，请以不吃什么
去理解饥饿的尊贵吧。

（一条烤熟的鱼会说水的语言。）

托钵僧敬水为神，破浪来到中国，
把一只空碗和一付空肠子
从笔到农具，递到我手上。
一小块耕地缩小了沙漠之大。
我还不是农夫，但正在变成农夫。
劳作，放下了思想。

这一锄头挖下去，

伤及苏菲的动脉和闪电，
再也捂不住雷霆滚滚的石油。
多少个草原帝国开始碎骨，
然后玉米开始生长，沙漠退去。
阿拉伯王子需要一丝羞愧检点自己，
小亚细亚需要一丝尊严变得更小，
天使需要一丝愤怒保持平静。
这一锄头挖下去并非都是收获，
（没有必要丰收，够吃就行了。）
而深挖之下，地球已被挖穿，

天空从光的洞穴逃离，
星象如一个盲人盯着歌声的脸。
词正本清源，黄金跪地不起。
物更仁慈了，即使造物的小小罪过
包容了物欲这个更大的罪过。
极善，从不考虑普通的善，
也不在乎伪善的回眸一笑。
因为在神圣的乞讨面前，
托钵僧已从人群消失。
没了他，众人手上的碗皆是空的。

2013, 10, 18, 上海

Drifter in the North

Can the flowers of a past life bloom beyond the complexion of this moon?

Silver-plated moonlight covers the land's insomniac night.

A screw and a flower embrace, tightening time.

Still a scholar from Jiangnan wants to sell time in the capital.

Eye of a flower, look into Buddha's eye and see yourself a blind man.

Man, what do you need to turn into the ancient one on top of you?

Still a daffodil wants to bloom inside a water lily,

but fast asleep in its center is neither a saint

nor a criminal: unless this body were a body beyond the body.

A tear as pure as this, who knows where it will go?

Young drifter in the north, idling beside a computer,

think back on that time as a child riding that old bicycle

into the sky: reaching home, the key fell to the ground.

There were a million ways to kneel down,

but none would find this key for you.

北漂人

前世的花，能开败今生这片月色吗？
镀银般的月光，覆盖大地的失眠夜。
螺丝与花儿抱在一起，拧紧了时间。
一个江南书生，偏要去京城卖时间，
花的眼，往佛眼里一看是个盲人。

人呵，怎么才能成为自己身上的古人？
一朵水仙，偏要开在睡莲里，
但深睡在这颗花心里的不是圣徒，
也不是罪人：除非此身是个身外身。
眼泪如此纯洁，不知去往何方。

年轻的北漂人，在电脑旁枯坐着，
回想起儿时曾把一辆老自行车
骑上天空：回家时，钥匙掉落在地。
有一百万种方式可以跪在大地上，
但没有一种能找到这片钥匙。

Hopkins Garden

The ink moon comes to the page.
This paper moon of the ancients, never sprayed
with pesticides.

A flower thief reincarnated as night mist
sleeps in a midnight garden.

He dreams of another on himself
stolen by flowers, blooming for a while.

... in this momentary bloom,
a thousand years pass.

No one knows the true form of these flowers,
whether they are Zhuangzi, or are Tao Yuanming.

Even the young scholar borrowing moonlight to read by
hasn't discerned the metaphor of flowers.

The ancients and moderns look at each other with the eyes of a flower.
And seen through Buddha's eyes, all are blind.

From the eye of the flower flies one hundred thousand fireflies,
a sky full of stars falling to the grass.

Without the buttons of the stars, can flowers and nuclear weapons
put on the clothes of the clouds?

Cloud world, body full of wormholes,
entirely unaware that time has slipped away.

Flower-thief, if you suddenly wake,
then step into the starry sky holding your lantern of words.

July 31, 2016

霍金花园

水墨的月亮来到纸上。
这古人的，没喷过杀虫剂
的纸月亮呵。

一个化身为夜雾的偷花贼
在深夜的花园里睡着了。

他梦见自己身上的另一个人
被花偷去，开了一小会儿。

..... 这片刻开花，
一千年过去了。

没人知道这些花儿的真身，
是庄子，还是陶渊明。

借月光而读的书生呵，
竟没读出花的暗喻。

古人今人以花眼对看。
而佛眼所见，一直是个盲人。

从花之眼飞出十万只萤火虫，
漫天星星落掉在草地上。

没了星星的钮扣，花儿与核弹，
还能彼此穿上云的衣裳么？

云世界，周身都是虫洞，

却浑然不觉时间已被漏掉。

偷花人，要是你突然醒来，
就提着词的灯笼步入星空吧。

July 31, 2016

The Miluo Qu Yuan Shrine

Soul oh and Ink oh a body of water in the rice flowers
crops growing on the human figure
white sleeves in a country's black windbreaker
some are cold of clothes some hot inside some sit and forget mountain ghosts
with all sentient being seated around the cycle of death and rebirth
rotating satisfaction with the *sūnyatā* of the myriad things
breaking the bile of ghosts like bug's transformation into butterfly
and then transforming a little longer but not transforming into mutation
just enough to see the empire as small
for man to stake it all

the gods must live or die

Qu Yuan submerged underwater the gods hold their breath
but are the *Heaven's Questions* questions for a child or for the teacher
the sky fills with anger dropping a rainstorm and gods' curses
something is held in deeply back to the black earth
held in hard nor does it float to the surface for a breath
or trade lungs with the fish that slipped the net
or use sound from fish lips to speak words of men
a storm is coming wind rushes through the house dropping fish scales
the old chair is creaking sitting between the past and present
a tragic wind digs up ten thousand people's ash prince bones
and blows them blows them into the tragic blowback of an inch of ash
local debt if not for the flowing of cold hard cash
wouldn't this national mourning be the poverty of princes enamored of flowers?

July 21, 2018

汨罗屈子祠

魂兮墨兮 一片水在天的稻花
大地的农作物长到人身上
一国的黑风衣中有一只白袖子
有人衣冷 有人内热 有人坐忘山鬼
而环坐在大轮回上的芸芸众生
以万有皆空转动一个圆满
破鬼胆 如昆虫变蝶
多变了一会儿 尚未变成突变
但足以变得一小天下
人的孤注下下去
 必有神的生死
屈子沉水 神在水底憋气
但天问是问童子 还是问先生？
天注一怒 降下大雨和大神咒
有什么被深深憋回了黑土地
硬憋着 也不浮出水面透气
也不和漏网的鱼换肺
也不用鱼唇的声音去说人话
起风了 老宅子哗啦哗啦 往下掉鱼鳞
老椅子嘎吱嘎吱 坐在古今之间
悲风把万人灰的君王骨头
挖出来吹 吹入一寸灰的悲回风
地方债若非哗哗流淌的真金白银
国殇又岂是迷花事君的大倥偬

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