

REALITY ELEGY

(Part of *NARRATIVE POEM*)

blood-red mire under tank tracks

is it

blossoms of January's plum or June's scholar-tree?

a face's vast expanse squeezed out from gaps between iron and steel

spun into a vortex of stone

as you have taken the steps that can't enmesh you

as you suddenly remember there's even a faint whiff of perfume

a sweet noose around your neck

as the seasons photocopy every flattened and crushed petal

so that you don't know what time you died

the sound of which Day of the Dead rain isn't sewing your silken eyes

when your astonishment splatters out with a gunshot's crack

plural first times eavesdrop on the one and only time

tears blisteringly hot but empty

we have taken the steps that can't enmesh us

as rumbling axles trundle beneath trouser turn-ups

in the College of International Relations dorm's dark corridors

lamps are always lit the frying-pan twilight

leaning close on the frozen twilight of the public toilet

January's waterfall flushes away names he shouted in dreams

the north wind hugs a photo album and wails

death eager as childbirth death that can't cope with shame

the age he pursues to face the ever-larger and larger

snowflakes in the pupils of mother's eyes

a hexagonal diamond cold

hides in the plum blossom rain of the renovated sickroom

scholar-tree blossom rain thunders down like shrapnel

do you recognize it?

denied white bloats the white that year by year went on growing

denied flesh

conceals the sewer's gaze

do you recognize it?

do we recognize

between the rubbernecking stars

(the witch said) relatives reborn together?

judged by endlessly-destroyed history to be relatives

in the depth of a black marble headstone

mother brushes by *lo, what might be this?*

brushing by the families turn the tank tracks turn

coming back the room empty now lovers truly gone

the drama of death has twisted their faces

the brass door handle grips tight

the hand that carries a full tub of fresh oysters

a full tub of sight spilt on the mouldy carpet

the letterbox he opens bears a substitute name

he thought it was his address read it out

souls fill the stage brains spurt out as the axe falls

hung by the neck to swing in the wind never lacking passion

detonate a flash of magnesium on the blue sea

to light up the distant gaze under the stair's recording

the laugh of the long-dead who have only now been returned

pathetically buried in his foreign self

the tears of the petals

should stupefy the nothingness of petals

tears leaking from writing paper of squares

should stupefy the transformed nothingness of a line of verse

the world is no more and no less than a flagstone that seals up dying

you should weep for your forgetting we have forgotten and still
forget

only then will we join in the weeping for this verbless verb

infer unweeping from endless weeping

with original human moistness

refuse to add yet more moistness

the blue sky speeds past at full tilt

tank tracks repeat

all death is simply a private matter in the end

stamping the metal taps of children dancing

CID undercover agents trouble factories grassing gardeners

AIDS villages charcoal-kiln slaves Taliban Marguerite soaring naked

Revolutionary Committees super fanboys G20 Ground Zero grave-robbers vandals

Cambodian skulls The Disappeared inventors of calendars makers of sentences

me anyone

it's never too late to go back to the surface

a rain shower brings the valley gloom

south-facing windows soaked portrait of bitter clarity

like long standing watermint in former familiarity

the orange web feet of wild ducks tread on him

the sound of water winnowing the empty pearls of bubbles

green tongues sing a dimming dirge backwards

Nero a rival for the wicked emperor of Sui

vast expanse of water

how he dips how he sucks at the snot of blossoming

floating fingers soak into the surfaces of moonlight and this poem

the vast expanse in one drop of water

fabricated grief chisels through January and June

stamens sometimes plum sometimes scholar-tree

the Troy in endless bedrooms

empties a white tunic play-acting the woman

the moon of the dead stands by a brand-new memorial gate

night fiddles with the shape of it

a camera set to anniversaries shoots on

ABSENCE

with a single candle before mother's picture-frame

with the railings of light that nail down a city

in a tall pavilion

laying sex bare

site stuck in the darkness

no final farewell for final farewells

on a bridge of writing looking at a river

turbid with numberless self-drownings in slow release

someone hiding at the fishing gets a hook in the jaw

there are no words for this moment

set in three hundred million year-old coral set on

his desk a rotting one of a kind

matching in silence the exquisite dismissal in the blue sky

nothing that isn't flashback

to reflect a bolt of silk on chilly water

the quill pens of all the banking's beard-grass shine silver

a lifetime signing the tastiest chill in the air

no other absolute but the blind eye

in love with the reason that is made up for yourself

so write a poem only worth writing to yourself again

provoked to be its own creation

reality is not a subject one face

mashed between words of iron and steel

is nobody's

the flag's handclapping fades with the sound of the wind

the place where a tent was pitched

straightaway sent to the place of a bowl of water

is it here?

your steps our steps

in the sound of metallic rain a place of wet and sticky running away

is it here?

but where is here?

where is this *ABSENCE OF SOMEONE*?

the daily Day of the Dead that can't enmesh the petals
banished a tender life that knew no exhaustion
reincarnated green from the never-reincarnated brings out an eye
vastness stuck in the throat

pale pale purple

fabricates a swaying pose

most expert in the fantasies of flowing

flowing turned into the unendurable miracle of flesh

watermint holds the ashes in a powder-puff

a day of not vomiting tank tracks a day of living sacrifice

the crack seawater surges through pouring into blind sound

"tonight for myself for you for leaving I weep"

arrive beyond astonishment

go on dying

Poem by Yang Lian

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