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Cover: Design by Mary Greene. The character is for *yen* (smoke). The classical calligraphy on the front cover is by the artist Dai Heng-yang. The same character in contemporary calligraphy on the back cover is by Pang Ying.



Smoking People

*Encountering the
New Chinese Poetry*

Edited by John Rosenwald

Chapbook 19

Introduction

Smoking People. Smouldering. Poetry as a source of the fire. Cigarettes. Rooms hazy with smoke. People ready to ignite. Poetry as a visible, audible, manifestation of the heat.

The Chinese have burned with poetry for thousands of years. In the twelve years since the Cultural Revolution, that flame has once again burst out with more warmth, perhaps with more danger.

In the fall of 1987 Ann Arbor and I taught English at Fudan University in Shanghai. Directly and indirectly we encountered a thriving interest in new poetry. This chapbook attempts to share our experience, to make more familiar a number of younger Chinese poets who have already begun to achieve an audience in the West, and to introduce some others, equally interesting, who have either not yet been translated or whose work is at least not widely known.

The first poet in our selection is the oldest, Duo Duo, who began publishing (at considerable risk) during the Cultural Revolution (1966-76). Not surprisingly he is regarded as a hero by many of the other poets, all of whom are under forty. They represent a generation of writers which emerged after, and partly in response to, those difficult years.

The most significant source for these poems is *Meng Long Shi Xuan* (*Anthology of Hazy Poetry*), the most popular and influential book of poems published in the past decade. In the United States the title has been variously translated: "Meng Long" becomes "obscure" or more often "misty." The connotations of "obscure," however, are too negative, those of "misty" perhaps too positive; I prefer "hazy," which captures from the original both the landscape metaphor and the sense of uncertainty. First compiled in 1982 from poems not permitted publication earlier, this anthology was expanded and widely distributed in 1985. Despite a run of 35,000 copies it quickly went out of print and is now, in our experience, difficult to obtain.

The first two poets in *Meng Long* are the best known: Bei Dao and Shu Ting. Bei Dao has taught in England and the U.S. and has been mentioned as a Nobel candidate. The poems by him in this selection, all from *Meng Long*, reflect a fairly wide variety of his styles. Shu Ting won national prizes early for poems such as "Love Poem Earth" and "Motherland, My Dear Motherland" and has been widely translated.

She travelled to the States three years ago to do a series of East Coast readings. The third best known of the *Meng Long* poets is Gu Cheng (sometimes Chen), represented here by only a single, short piece. Also from *Meng Long* are Xie Ye and Sun Wu-jun.

The other poets included in the chapbook are not ordinarily seen as part of the same group. Whether in fact there is anything that unifies *Meng Long* poets is questionable; despite some similarities among the poems, the anthology seems more a compilation of new poets than a school. For example, one of the other poets here, Man Ke, was published in *Meng Long* ("The City"), but both in this poem and in his more recent writing he is more closely allied with two other "city poets," Lan Se and Wang Xiao-long. These "city poets" differentiate themselves from *Meng Long* as more direct, more ironic, more contemporary. Altogether this chapbook makes no pretense of inclusive- or exclusiveness; rather it attempts to cut across what may be arbitrary clusters to provide a sense of the fires that have been burning, invisible in the West, and often in China herself, over the past two decades.

John Rosenwald

2 January 1989

当人民从干酪上站起

歌声，省略了革命的血腥

八月象一张残忍的弓

恶毒的儿子走出农舍

携带着烟草和干燥的喉咙

牲口被蒙上了野蛮的眼罩

屁股上挂着发黑的尸体象肿大的鼓

直到篱笆后面的牺牲也渐渐模糊

远远地，又开来冒烟的队伍……

——多多

Two Poems

**WHEN PEOPLE RISE FROM CHEESE
STATEMENT #1**

Songs, but the bloody revolution goes unnoticed
August is a ruthless bow
The vicious son walks out of the farmhouse
Bringing with him tobacco and a dry throat
The beasts must bear cruel blinders
Corpses encrusted in hair hang
From the swollen drums of their buttocks
Till the sacrifices behind the fence
Become blurry
From far away there comes marching a troop
Of smoking people

语言的制作者来自厨房

要是语言的制作者来自厨房

内心就是卧靠

妄想，就是卧靠。他们说
从鸟儿眼睛表达过的妄想里

摆弄弱音器的男孩子

承认：骚动

正象韵律

不会作梦的脑子

只是一块时间的荒地

摆弄弱音器的男孩子承认

但不懂得：

被避孕的种米子

并不生产形象

每一粒种米是一个既因

想要说出的

原因，正像地址

不说。抽烟的野蛮人

不说就把柱子

按进桌面。他们说

一切一切议论

应当停止——当

四周的马匹是那样安静

当它们，在观察人的眼睛……

THE PRODUCTION OF LANGUAGE
IS IN THE KITCHEN

If the production of language is in the kitchen
the heart is the bedroom. They say
if the heart is the bedroom
then fantasy is the master of it.
From the fantasy once expressed in the birds' eyes
the boy playing with the mute
admits: tumult
is melody.

A brain that cannot dream
is a wasteland of time.
The boy playing with the mute admits
but does not understand:
a seed not allowed to conceive produces no images.
Every seed leads to something
something wanting-to-speak
but like an address it never speaks.

The savage who smokes presses the walnut
into the tabletop
without a word. They say
all the speaking should stop—when
the horses around keep quiet, when
the horses are watching human eyes.

一代人

黑夜给了我黑色的眼睛
我却用它寻找光明

——顾城

A GENERATION

I got my dark eyes from the dark night
But I use them to seek for light

Gu Chen

岛

1

你在雾海中航行
没有帆
你在月夜下停泊
没有锚

路从这里消失
夜从这里消失

2

没有标志
没有清晰的界限
只有浪花祝福的山崖
留下岁月那沉闷的痕迹
和一点点威严的纪念

孩子们走向沙滩
月光下，远处的鲸鱼
正升起高高的喷泉

3

鸥群醒了
翅膀接连着翅膀
叫声那么凄厉
震颤着海浪合欢树叶
和孩子的心

在这小小的世界里
难道唤醒的只是痛苦

4

地平线倾斜了
摇晃着，翻转过来
一只海鸥坠落而下
热血染卷了硕大的蒲叶
那无所不在的夜色
遮掩了梳声

Three Poems

ISLAND

- I. You sail on the foggy sea
With no sail
You are moored in the moonlit night
With no anchor

The road ends here
The night ends here
- II. There is no mark
No line of demarcation
Only the steep cliff the sea spray prays for
Preserving the dreary traces of months and years
And the remembrance of just a bit of prestige

The children walk toward the beach
In the moonlight a distant whale
Spouts its high fountain
- III. Awaking, the flock of gulls
Flies wingtip to wingtip
Uttering grief-filled shrieks
Making all the mimosa leaves tremble
And the children's hearts

In this small world
Can sorrow be the only thing that's awakened
- IV. The horizon tilts
Wobbles, turns upside down
A gull drops like a shot
Its hot blood curls
The rush's huge leaf
The all-encompassing night
Hides the sound of a gun

——这是禁地
 这是自由的结局
 沙地上插着一支羽毛的笔
 带着微湿的气息
 它属于颤抖的船舷和季节风
 属于岸，属于雨的余斗线
 昨天或明天的太阳
 如今却在这里
 写下死亡所公证的秘密

5
 每个浪头上
 浮着一根闪光的羽毛
 孩子们堆起小小的沙丘
 海水围拢过来
 象花园，冷清地摇动
 月光的挽联金甬向天边

6
 呵，棕榈
 是你的沉默
 举起叛逆者的剑
 又一次
 风托起头发
 象托起旗帜中迎风招展
 最后的疆界
 永远在孩子们的心里

7
 夜，迎风而立
 为浩劫
 为潜伏的凶手
 金甬下柔软的地毡
 摆好一排排贝壳的杯盏

8
 有了无涯的天空就够多了
 有了天空就够多了
 听吧，琴
 在召唤失去的声音

—This is forbidden land
 This is the end of liberty
 A feathered pen sticks into the sand
 Which holds a slightly moist breath
 It belongs to the boat's shuddering sides, to the seasonal winds
 It belongs to the shore, to the slanting rain
 The sun of yesterday or tomorrow
 Writes down today
 The secret sworn to by death

V. At the crest of each wave
 Floats a shimmering feather
 The children pile up a small mountain of sand
 The sea encircles it like a funeral wreath
 Forlornly wavering
 Elegiac ribbons of moonlight extend to the edge of the sky

VI. O palms
 It's your silence
 That raises rebellious swords.
 Once again the wind
 Rouses your hair
 As if unfurling flags.

 The last frontier
 Rests always in the children's hearts

VII. The night, standing in the wind's teeth,
 Spreads out a soft carpet
 For the catastrophe
 For the hidden murderer
 And lays out shells as if they were goblets and plates

VIII. So long as the sky is innocent that's enough
 So long as the sky is there that's enough

 Listen: the music
 Recalls the lost voices

回答

卑鄙是卑鄙者的通行证，
高尚是高尚者的墓志铭。
看吧，在那镀金的天空中，
飘满了死者弯曲的倒影。

冰川纪过去了，
为什么到处都是冰凌？
好望角发现了，
为什么死海里千帆相争？

我来到这个世界上，
只带着纸、绳索和身影，
为了在审判之前，
宣读那些被判决的声音。

告诉你吧，世界，
我——不——相——信！
纵使你脚下有一千名挑战者，
那就把我算做第一千零一名。

我不相信天是蓝的；
我不相信雷的回声；
我不相信梦是假的；
我不相信死无报应。

如果海洋注定要决堤，
让所有的苦水注入我心中；
如果陆地注定要上升，
就让人类重新选择生存的峰顶。

新的转机和闪闪的星斗，
正在缀满没有遮拦的天空，
那是五千年的象形文字，
那是未来人们凝视的眼睛。

——北岛

A REPLY

Meanness is the passport of the mean
Nobility is the epitaph of the noble
Look: In the gilded sky
Swirl distorted reflections of the dead

The Ice Age is over, yet everywhere we see icicles
The Cape of Good Hope has already been discovered
On the Dead Sea why do thousands of sails
Still compete with each other?

I came to this world
With only paper, rope, and my own shadow
So that before the trial begins
I can speak out the voice that has already been judged

Let me tell you, world,
I DO NOT BELIEVE
Even if a thousand challengers lie at your feet
Number me one thousand and one

I do not believe the sky is blue
I do not believe the thunder rumbles
I do not believe dreams are dreams
I do not believe deaths have their deaths

If the sea is destined to break its dikes
Let all the bitter water flow into my heart
If the land is destined to rise
Let humanity choose once again on which peak we'll survive

The open sky is sprinkled
With new turns and sparkling stars
The hieroglyphs of 5,000 years' history
The gazing eyes of those who follow us

— 切

- 一切都是命运
- 一切都是烟云
- 一切都是没有结局的开始
- 一切都是稍纵即逝的追寻
- 一切欢乐都没有微笑
- 一切苦难都没有泪痕
- 一切语言都是重复
- 一切交往都是初逢
- 一切爱情都在心里
- 一切往事都在梦中
- 一切希望都带着注释
- 一切信仰都带着呻吟
- 一切爆发都有片刻的宁静的
- 一切死亡都有冗长的回声

——北岛

EVERYTHING

Everything is fate
Everything is clouds and mist
Everything is beginnings without ends
Everything is a search for something that always escapes
Every mirth is without smiles
Every misery is without tears
Every utterance is mere repetition
Every encounter is merely a first meeting
Every love lies hidden in the heart
Every memory lives only in dreams
Every hope has a footnote
Every faith is full of grief and groaning
Every moment of peace contains tumult
Every death is a boring echo that goes on and on

Bei Dao

这也是——切

不是一切大树
都被风暴折断；
不是一切种子
都找不到适宜的土壤；
不是一切真情
都流失在人心的沙漠里；
不是一切理想
都甘愿被折掉翅膀。

不，不是一切
都像你说的那样！

不是一切火焰
都只燃点着自己
而不把别人照亮；
不是一切星星
都仅指示黑暗
而不报告曙光；
不是一切歌声
都掠过耳旁
而不留在心上。

不，不是一切
都像你说的那样！

不是一切呼唤都没有回响；
不是一切损失都无法补偿；
不是一切深渊都是灭亡；
不是一切灭亡都覆盖在弱者头上；
不是一切心灵

都可以踩在脚下，烂在泥里；
不是一切后果
都是眼泪血印，而不展现笑容。

一切的现在都孕育着未来，
未来的一切都生长于它的昨天。
希望，而且为它斗争，
请把这一切放在你的肩上。

——舒婷

Five Poems

**THIS IS ALSO EVERYTHING
IN REPLY TO A YOUNG FRIEND'S EVERYTHING**

Not every big tree breaks in the storm
Not every seed fails to find soil and root
Not every true love vanishes in the desert of human hearts
Not every dream wishes to have its wings clipped
No, everything is not as you say

Not every flame burns only for itself
 without illuminating others
Not every star only points the way in the darkness
 without ever predicting the dawn
Not every song visits your ear
 without leaving a gift in your heart
No, everything is not as you say

It's not true that every appeal has no echo
It's not true the every loss remains forever a loss
It's not true that every abyss means destruction and death
It's not true that every catastrophe falls on the heads of the weak
It's not true the every heart is trampled underfoot
It's not true that everything ends in tears and blood stains
 with no trace of joy
The present is the embryo of the future
To hope and to fight for one's hope—
Please put this on your shoulders

土地情詩

我愛土地，就象
愛我沉默寡言的父親

向這旺盛的熱呼呼的土地呵
汗水發酵的油浸浸的土地呵
在有力的犁刃和赤腳下

微微喘息着

被內心巨大的熱能推動

上升與下沉着

背負着銅像、紀念碑、博物館

卻把最後審判寫在斷層里

我的
冰封的、泥濘的、龜裂的土地呵

我的
沈默的、寬厚的、嚴厲的土地呵

給我膚色和語言的土地

給我智慧和力量的土地

我愛土地，就象

愛我溫柔多情的母親

印滿太陽之吻的丰滿的土地呵
收容層層落葉

又拱起莊莊新芽

一再被人遺棄

却心不對人真心

產生一切音向、色彩、线条

本身卻被叫做卑賤的泥巴

我的

黑沉沉的、血汪汪的、白花花的土地呵

我的

葳蕤的、寂寞的、坎坷的土地呵

給我愛情和仇恨的土地

給我痛苦與歡樂的土地

父親給我無涯无际的夢

母親給我敏感誠摯的心

我的詩行是

沙沙作响的相思樹林

日夜向土地傾訴着

永不變質的愛情。

——舒婷

LOVE POEM EARTH

I love earth

Just as I love my wordless father
 Earth breathing warmth with its rivers of blood
 Earth fermenting with sweat, fertile with oil
 Quickening slightly under the strong plow and bare feet
 Rising and falling from heat at the heart's core
 You must shoulder bronze statues, monuments, museums
 But sign the last judgment on the line of the fault.
 My frost-crusted, mud-coated, sun-crackled earth
 My stern, generous, indignant earth
 Earth granting me skin color and language
 Earth granting me wisdom and strength

I love earth

Just as I love my compassionate mother
 Robust earth covered with kissprints from the sun's lips
 Collector of leaf-layers, of sprouts springing up after sprouts
 Time and again abandoned by man, never abandoning man
 Creating each sound, each color, each curve
 And still you are called dirt.
 My lead-lustred, red-pooled, white-spotted earth
 My rough, lonely, untended earth
 Earth granting me love and hate
 Earth granting me pain and joy

Father grants me an infinite dream

Mother grants me a sensitive heart

The lines of my poems

are the sounds of the gramtree grove

Day and night sending out to the earth

its incessant shower of loveseed

祖國呵，我親愛的祖國

我是你河边上破舊的老水車，
 數百年來紡着疲憊的歌；
 我是你額頭上沉重的礦燈，
 照你在歷史的隧洞里蝸行摸索；
 我是干癟的稻穗；是失修的路基；
 是淤灘上的駁船
 把纜繩深深
 勒進你的肩膊，
 ——祖國呵！

我是貧窮，
 我是悲哀。
 我是你祖祖輩輩
 痛苦的希望呵，
 是“飛天”袖間
 千百年來落到地面的花朵，
 ——祖國呵！

我是你嶄新的理想，
 剛從神話的蛛網里掙脫；
 我是你雪被下苦蓮的胚芽；
 我是你挂着眼淚的笑渦；
 我是新刷出的雪白的起跑線；
 是緋紅的黎明
 正在噴薄，
 ——祖國呵！

我是你十億分之一，
 是你九百六十万平方的总和；
 你以傷痕累累的乳房
 喂養了
 迷惘的我、深思的我、沸騰的我，
 那就從我的血肉之軀上
 去取得
 你的富饒、你的榮光、你的自由；
 ——祖國呵，
 我親愛的祖國！

——舒婷

MOTHERLAND, MY DEAR MOTHERLAND

I am the old battered mill on your river
For hundreds of years weaving a weary song
I am the lamp on your forehead, darkened by coal dust
Lighting your way as you grope like a snail down history's tunnel
I am the rice stalk, my head only husks
I am the road bed, out of repair
The barge stuck on the silted shore
Its towline sunk deep in your shoulder
O, my motherland

I am poverty
I am sorrow
I am the aching hope of generations of your ancestors
In the wide sleeves of the apsaras I am the flowers
Which failed for thousands of years to fall to earth
O, my motherland

I am your newest ideal
Just struggling free from the cobwebs of myth
I am the sprouting bud of the ancient lotus, found under the snow
I am dimples hung with tears
I am the starting line, freshly painted
I am the scarlet dawn, with the sun just peeping out
O, my motherland

I am one of your billion
I am all your acres of land
With your much-bruised breast you have nursed
The lost me, the meditative me, the boiling me
Then from my flesh and blood
Take your wealth, your glory, your freedom
O, my motherland

……之间

只是一个普通的巷口
 短墙上许有星星点点花
 许是一幅未成龄的炭笔画
 可能是这一阵大风
 也可能是一种气味
 凌乱无根而生
 意识的罗盘无针无向
 好象你一脚
 正踩着那磁场
 然后你不断回想
 你一定是错过了什么
 究竟守候了你多年和你期
 得日久的是是什么
 就是套着脚印一步步回来
 也不能够
 回到原来那个地方
 你再不起身打开窗子
 一个姿态可能引起

相应的无数暗示
 在平常的风雨之夜，想起
 潮湿的双脚
 泥泞的路
 那在石阶准备的时刻
 将瓜子搭在你背后的是谁呢

它不呼喊也不回答
 或许它从未如此接近，只是
 永恒在瞬间

穿过你的神经丝
 犹如分在浅草和芦雪的风

你始终说不出
 在什么地方你感觉到什么
 它是永远不能重复的一种

消逝
 但又熟悉到，仿佛
 在前生的溪水里
 你又浸了一次

——舒婷

BETWEEN...

It's only the entrance to an ordinary lane.
On the short section of wall, some stippling in a flower design.
Probably a naive charcoal sketch.
Probably it's this gust of wind,
Or this certain smell
Created without roots, confused.
The compass of the mind has no needle or points
As if you had stepped into a magnetic field.
Then you continually suspect you've missed something.
What on earth has watched over you,
Have you waited for, so many years?
Even if you walk back in your own footprints
You can never return to the same place.
You do not rise to open the window.
A single gesture might yield hundreds of hints.
On an ordinary stormy night
I recall two wet feet, the muddy road.
In that unguarded instant
What is it that puts its paws on your back?
It neither cries nor answers.
Perhaps it has never gotten so near.
It's eternity in the blink of an eye
That pierces your bundle of nerves
Like the winds separating sparse grass
From the fluff of the reeds.
You could never say where you are, what you feel.
It's a disappearing that never repeats itself
And yet it's familiar
As being plunged in the stream of your previous life.

复 活

透过面具
 以无焦距的凝视
 使人生变成几场化妆舞会的是
 谁呢
 你喋喋大笑，你号啕痛哭
 连十十塔螺都吸附着风暴
 吃哑有声
 在一切喧嚣中默不作响的是谁呢
 不要回头
 你身后只是沉沉的宇宙

或许存在只是不停地波动
 把你整个儿铸成一川河流
 那么，站在岸边
 和你貌似似神作的是谁呢
 象一棵树
 从萌芽到老朽
 那把你从地下往空中不断
 循环的
 仅仅是水吗？
 不必倾听
 你不能把雨声的流程
 捧在掌尖端详

RESURRECTION

Through masks
and unfocused stares
turning life
to a masquerade
Who is it?
Your endless chuckling and chortling
your screeching and shrieking
By drinking the storm
even pagoda snails
can make sucking sounds
Who is it
remains silent
in all this hubbub?
Don't turn your head;
at your back
is only the dumbbell universe.

Under it all perhaps
is only unceasing undulation.
Into this stream
life lays you flat.
Then who is it
who stands on the shore
looking like you, but not you.
Is it only water circulates
from the root of you up to the air
like a tree from sprout to old age.
Try not to listen too hard.
In the palm of your hand
you cannot scrutinize
the river of the sound of rain.

于是蚕蠕动着
 穿过
 一环又一环自身的陷阱
 为了片刻羽化
 飞行状地
 死去

上十字架的亚瑟
 走下素已成为耶稣，但是
 两千年只有一次

——舒婷

Therefore the silkworm squirms
through traps of its own body
ring after ring
to its momentary transmigration and dies away as if flying.

Arthur, who is crucified,
steps down from the cross
becomes Christ
but in two thousand years
it happens only once.

Shu Ting

我终于转过身去

我终于转过身去
后面是一声怪异的笑
许多蜘蛛的目光
还在小巷里爬动

干燥的大路没有笑
风在旁边跺脚
一蓬蓬金色的灰尘生长着
春天眯起眼睛

我不喜欢风
可也并不害怕
我要淡然地忘记他们
一直走向海滨的召唤

那里有许多年老的船
有碎裂的瓷瓶和贝壳
星光闪闪的水平面
覆盖着永恒的宁静

我将属于海洋
属于那些纯洁的生命
我和浪花一起去奉南花朵
去热爱牺牲的珊瑚

——谢烨

AT LAST I TURN MY BACK

At last I turn my back.
From behind comes a burst of weird laughter.
The eyes of many spiders
Still crawl in the alleyway.

From the dried-up road, no laughter.
Alongside, the wind is stamping its feet.
Clusters of golden dust blossom.
Spring squints.

I do not like the wind.
Nor am I afraid of it.
In my own nonchalant way I'll forget them
And walk toward the call of the shore.

There are many aged boats.
There are battered vases and shells.
The blue glinting water
Covers eternal peace.

I will belong to the sea. I will belong
To those pure lives. In the company of sea foam
I will dedicate flowers, I will love the coral
Sacrificing itself.

Xie Ye

我还怕什么

把我踩进了泥土
 我就会变成一块煤
 在没有阳光的地方
 睁大乌黑的眼睛
 总有一天中午
 我会被挖掘出来
 我真诚的笑脸
 会把少女脸颊的白霜
 融化成早晨的红霞

我还怕什么

把我扔到了大海
 我就会变成一只海鸥
 我有温柔的爱人
 也有活泼的子女
 有一个在岩缝里组成的家庭
 我会用我的双翅
 去驱赶渔船的孤独
 让人们把我编成
 无数支美丽的传说

我还怕什么？

把我吊在了天上
 我就会变成一股风
 去预示豺狼的行凶
 高打着企我鸟的美梦
 到处都是我
 我让英雄的鲜血
 快一点在胸口上凝固
 把散发着皂香的黑发
 吹到小伙子的脸上

啊，我什么也不怕！

——孙武军

WHAT ELSE AM I AFRAID OF?

Trample me into the earth
I will become a piece of coal.
Somewhere forsaken by sun
I will open my dark eyes.
Someday at noon I will be dug out.
The sincerity of my smile
Will melt the face of the young girl powdered with white
Into the red clouds of morning.

What else am I afraid of?

Throw me into the sea
I will become a silvery gull.
I have a wife who is gentle
Sons and daughters brimming with life.
I will have my home built in a slash in the rock.
I will use my two wings
To dispel the loneliness of the fishing boat.
I will have others weave me into countless beautiful legends.

What else am I afraid of?

Hang me in the sky
I will become a gust of wind.
I will warn of atrocities of the wolf.
I will scratch at the penguins' beautiful dreams.
I will be everywhere.
I will congeal, as quick as I can,
the hero's blood on his breast.
I will blow the black hair, scented with soap,
Onto the young man's face.

Ah, I have nothing to be afraid of.

废城

只记得是一个冬天的夜晚我坐在辆有轨电车上
 经过一座森林当时正下着大雪
 醒来时已是秋风萧瑟
 我发现自己躺在一家书辅的门坎上
 冰上的月亮硕大无比
 街上却看不见月亮
 这里的人都上那去了，留下一座空城
 连一只野狗都看不见
 街石的缝里长满野麦
 窗台上都是怪物的脚印
 连那远远传来的报时的钟声
 也只是来自心中的幻觉
 我在街上闲逛
 敲打着从柜台上拣来的几文铜钱
 就象回到久别的故乡
 依稀可辨的酒楼
 小茶馆里那盏还发着微光的不可思议的煤油灯
 这一切实在迷人
 我想从街道中央拾起那把锈迹斑斑的唾弃匙
 度过自己的残生

——兰色

Three Poems

CITY IN RUINS

I only remember one winter night sitting in the tramcar
Passing a woods when it was snowing hard.
When I wake up the autumn winds already groan in the trees.
And I find myself lying on the threshold of a pawnshop.
The moon overhead is immense, yet there is no moonlight in the street.
Where are the people of this city, which is now empty.
Not even a stray dog can be seen.
The cracks between paving stones are filled with wild oats.
On the window sills are the footprints of monsters.
Even the distant bells of the nightwatchman
Are only fantasies in the heart.
I wander about in the street clinking a few old coins
 picked up from some counter.
It seemed to me I had returned to my native land, which I left long ago.
The taverns were barely distinguishable.
In the small tea shop the kerosene lamp
 continues its incomprehensible flicker.
All this is fascinating.
I want to pick up the rusty key from the middle of the street
And complete the residue of my existence.

中国人的背影

你常常在十字路口的北面
闷闷不乐地靠在一些不引人注目的地方
注视那些匆匆远处的路人的背影
他们匆匆远处的背影
在斜阳下多么富丽堂皇
每个人都显得温柔高高
在这样的時候
谁还会相信世界上有丑恶的东西
以往的經歷似乎只是来自一出假想中的悲剧
人生就象这街头的暮色
美好得让人真想痛哭一场
回到家你总是含着眼泪对我說
只有中国人的背影显得那样苍老
中国人，唉，中国人的背影
难道中国人只有背影
他们总是匆匆地离去
从不把头回过來
即使深夜，也有很多沉重的背影在你面前闪过

——兰色

THE CHINESE: BACK VIEW

Often you stand on the north side
of the intersection
leaning against some obscure corner
depressed
watching from a distance those figures walking, hurrying by.
How magnificent and splendid they are under the slanting sun.
Everyone looks so gentle and noble.
At such times
who can believe
there are hideous things in the world?
Past experience seems only
an imagined tragedy.
Life, like the twilight on the street,
is so beautiful
that it makes you feel you need a good cry.
Back home, you always say to me
with tears in your eyes,
"Only the backs of the Chinese
seem that weary."
The Chinese, O the back view of the Chinese.
Do they have only their back view?
They are always hurrying away,
never turning their heads.
Even in the dead of night
still in front of you
there are many weighty shadows
flashing by.

圣诞节

总觉得塞进邮筒的信
对方不会收到
放在行旁的自行车
会被别人偷掉
总觉得端在手上的高压锅
马上就会爆炸
转播足球赛的电视机
会出什么故障
如果撞上了什么东西
那一定得了脑震荡
如果这班车她还不到的话
我就要一个人被撇在世界上

一个成熟的男人
身上为什么会有
那么多的份量

—— 兰色

CHRISTMAS

I always feel that
the letter slipped into the mailbox
will never reach its destination
The bicycle parked by the side of the street
will be stolen by someone
The pressure cooker in my hands
will immediately explode
The TV broadcasting the soccer match
will break down
If I bump into something
Of course I get a concussion
If she doesn't come on this bus
I'll be left alone in this world

Why should a mature man bear
such heavy burdens
on his shoulders?

Lan Se

城市

1
醒来，
是你孤零零的脑袋。
夜深了，
风还在街上
像个迷路的孩子一样
东奔西撞。

2
街，
被折磨得
软弱无力地躺着。
那流着唾液的大黑猫，
饥饿地哭叫。

3
这城市疼痛得东倒西歪，
在黑夜中显得苍白。

4
沉睡的天，
你的头发被深夜揉得零乱。
我被你搅得，
彻底不眠。

也许是梦，
猜透了我的心情，
才来替我抒情。
啊，那被你欺与骗着的
数不清的眼睛。

5
当天空中
垂下了一缕阳光柔软的头发，
城市
浸透着东方的豪华。

6
人们在互相追逐，
给后代留下了颜色。
孩子们从阳光里归来，
给母亲带回爱。

Two Poems

THE CITY

- I. Wake up
Only your bare head is here
The night is deep
The wind in the street
Is running from place to place
Like a lost child

- II. The street
After so much torture
Lies flat on its back
The big black cat, mouth watering
Cries out in hunger

- III. The city
Aches so much it leans one way, then another
Pale in the black night

- IV. The sky is fast asleep
Your hair kneaded in the depths of night
I was so disturbed by you
All night long I could not sleep

Only perhaps when the dream reads my mind
Does it sing of what I feel
Ah, all the eyes you are deceiving

- V. When from the sky
Hangs a strand of hair soft as sunshine

The city
Soaked with splendors of the east

- VI. The people are chasing each other
Leaving their colors for posterity
The children return from the sunlight
Bringing love to the mothers

7
啊，城市，
你这个东方的孩子。
在母亲干瘪的胸脯上，
你寻找着粮食。

8
这多病的孩子对着你出神，
太阳的七弦琴。
你却映出了她这样瘦弱的身影。

9
城市啊，
面对着饥饿的孩子的眼睛：
你却如此冰冷，
如此无情。

10
黑夜，
总不愿意把我放过。
它露着绿色的单眼睛。
可是，
你什么也不对我言说。
夜深了，这天空似乎倾斜，
我便安慰我：
欢乐吧！
欢乐是人人都会有的！

—— 芒克

- VII. Ah, the city.
You, child of the east

From the mother's shrivelled breast
You want to find food
- VIII. The sickly child
Stares at you
Seven-stringed instrument of the sun
Yet you shed light on her scrawny body
- IX. Ah, the city
In the face of the child's hungry eyes
You are so cold, so unfeeling
- X. The depth of night is never willing to let me go on
It winks one green eye
And yet you say nothing to me
The night is deep. The sky seems off-center
So I console myself:
Let us have joy!
Joy will come to us all

死后也还会衰老

地里已长出死者的白发
这使我相信，人死后也还会衰老
人死后也还会有恶梦扑在身上
也还会惊醒，睁眼看到
又一个白天从蛋壳里出世
并且很快便开始忙于在地上啄食
也还会听见自己的脚步
听出自己的双腿在欢笑，在忧愁
也还会回忆，尽管头脑里空洞洞的
尽管那些心里的人们已经腐烂
也还会歌颂他们，歌颂爱人
用双手稳稳地接住她的脸
然后又把她小心地放进草丛
看着她笨拙地拖出自己性感的躯体
也还会等待，等待阳光
最后像块破草席一样被风卷走

GROWING OLD EVEN AFTER DEATH

The white hair of the dead has already grown in the fields.
This makes me believe a person may grow old even after death.

Even after death a person may still have nightmares pounce on him.
May wake up surprised, open his eyes, and see.

Another day hatches out of its eggshell,
Starts to be busy, pecking around on the ground.

May also hear his own footsteps,
His two legs laughing and grieving.

May also remember, though his head is empty,
Though those in his heart have already rotted away.

May also praise them, may praise his lover,
And with his two hands hold her face steadily,

And then carefully set her in a clump of grass,
Watching her clumsily extract her own sexy body.

May also be waiting, waiting for the sunlight
Which at last the wind whisks away like a scrap of worn sleeping mat.

等待着日落，它就如同害怕一只猛兽
会撕碎它的肉似地躲开你

而夜晚，它却温顺地让你拉进怀里
任随你玩弄、发泄，一声不吭

也还会由于劳累就地躺下，闭目
听着天上群羊在争斗时发出的吼叫

也还会担忧，或许，一夜之间
天空流的面将全部流到地上

也还会站起来，哀悼一副死去的面孔
可她的眼睛却还在注视着你

也还会希望，愿自己永远地活着
愿自己别是一只被它人猎取的动物

被放进火里烤着，被吞食

也还会痛苦，也还会不堪忍受呵

地里已长出死者的白发

这使我相信：人死后也还会衰老

—— 芒克

Waiting for the sunset, which hides from you
As if afraid some beast were about to shred its flesh.

At night this sun passively let you pull it into your arms,
Let you fondle it freely, let you satisfy yourself on it without a word.

May still lie down from exhaustion, close his eyes,
Listening to the roars of hoards of beasts fighting against each
other in the sky.

May still feel worried, that perhaps overnight
The blood shed in the sky will all flow down on the earth.

May still rise up mourning a dead face,
One with her eyes still staring at you.

May still hope, wishing to live forever,
Wishing not to be an animal, hunted by others

Thrown in the fire to be roasted, devoured.
May still feel pain, may still find things unbearable.

The white hair of the dead has already grown in the fields.
This makes me believe a person may grow old even after death.

Man Ke

第三只眼睛

不能忘记你手臂上的伤疤
 长长弯弯的一只眼睛
 美丽而又痛苦，不能忘记
 孤独的目光象来自一块陨石
 在废气和尘土喧嚣的街上
 我说，不用怕
 该遮掩的不是它，我想
 它并不怕面对世界
 倒是世界怕被它看见
 你的小手绢小得可怜
 这世界象个流氓
 每分钟每堵墙壁都会飞出刀子
 这刀子拨开了你的第三只眼睛
 要想真正看清一点什么
 请睁开第三只眼睛
 看清所有呼吸或停止呼吸的
 不用怕，我说
 我也有另一只眼睛长在心上

由于它的存在
 我们已有的两眼
 每一只都成为第三只眼睛
 美丽而又痛苦
 世界因为遮掩而失去遮掩
 我们的沉默揭露一切
 这场对话发生在某个屋檐下
 喧嚣远离而去
 我们平静如在无人的山谷
 我们激动如两个寂寞的长跑者
 最后到达终点

——王小龙

Three Poems

THE THIRD EYE

Don't forget the scar on your arm
A single eye that is long and arched
Beautiful and yet painful. Don't forget
The solitary look in the eyes
As if coming from a meteorite.
On the street noisy with dust and exhaust
I say, don't be afraid
What should be masked is not *that*. I think
It's not afraid of facing the world
The world is afraid of being seen by it.
Your handkerchief is piteously little.
The world is a scoundrel
Every minute from every wall a dagger can fly out,
Tear open your third eye.
If you really want to see something clearly
Please open your third eye
And see clearly all that is breathing or has ceased breathing.
Don't be afraid, I say,
I also have an additional eye on my heart.
Because it is there each of the two eyes we already own
Has become a third eye
Beautiful and yet painful.
The world, by masking itself, loses its mask.
Our silence unmasks everything.
This dialogue takes place under a certain eave.
The noise is further and further away.
We feel at peace, as if in a valley where no one lives.
We feel excited as when at last
Two lonely, long-distance runners reach the finish line.

纪念

(谨献于又亲见骨灰盒前)

一

一群酒杯站上饭桌
 哪一个是你
 抽屉打翻在地
 你写了一半的信还要说些什么
 那双老式皮鞋停泊在干涸的床底
 费心地思考
 刮脸刀上锈住几根你的胡子
 为什么一切那么快就成为过去
 为我吹灭火柴
 一抬头看见了你
 在镜子里抽丝因
 你每天早晨坐在那里
 觉得纳闷
 你很聪明
 所以无能
 你每一次发火其实都是在骂自己
 你的皮肤很黑
 毛孔粗大
 你的眼里掠过悲哀的雁群时
 秋天中失过去了
 你就是我

二

万万你忘记了你
 总是在我以为事情过去以后
 突然把我推出门外仿佛
 德罚就站在街上等候
 你故意不注意我故意不注意放在
 茶几上的诗
 使劲地弹几下烟灰我想
 我就是那只旧铁皮烟缸
 一次次被你粗暴地烫伤
 你一关灯天就黑了

IN MEMORIAM
 (DEDICATED RESPECTFULLY BEFORE MY FATHER'S
 FUNERAL URN)

- I. The ranks of wine glasses take their stand on the dining table
 Which one is you
 Once someone tipped over a drawer
 What more did you want to say in your half-finished letter
 The old-fashioned pair of shoes is still moored on the
 dried-up floor under the bed
 The shoes keep urging themselves to get on with their meditation
 The rusty blunt razor got stuck in a few of your beard's bristles
 Why does everything pass by so quickly
 When I blow out the match
 I lift my head and see you
 Smoking in the mirror
 Every morning you sit there
 Feeling confused
 You are very intelligent
 And therefore incompetent
 Every time you explode you are really blasting yourself
 Your skin is very dark
 Your pores are very large
 At the moment the flock of wild geese sadly passes your eyes
 Autumn is going
 You are in fact me
- II. No no you've forgotten yourself
 Each time I thought something was over
 I was suddenly pushed out the door as though
 Punishment would be waiting there at the street corner
 You deliberately chose to ignore
 I deliberately chose to ignore
 The poem that was left on the end table
 With a firm flick of the ashes I think
 I probably *am* that old battered sheet metal ashtray
 Burnt brutally time and again at your hands
 You turn off the light everywhere it grows dark

你让我一丝不挂地在人群中
 奔跑从屋顶摔到海上
 我相信这个梦相信
 你现在又用厌恶的眼光揍我脑后
 全部原因在于
 我就是你

三

假如我想第二天成为好^学生
 闹钟准会在半夜心肌梗塞
 我老老实实地去当挣钱的工人
 谁知又被叫去指挥唱歌
 我想做个好丈夫
 可是红肠总是卖完
 不知为什么
 这个世界老和我过不去
 我宁愿自己是个混蛋
 于是我想和一切和好
 和你和好
 你却突然转身离去

总之出太阳的中午下雨是正常的
 你看雨在阳光中亮亮闪闪
 和谐得象一对流浪儿
 因此我们活着不能太计较
 你说对吗你怎么不告诉我
 这棵风中的桉树

——王小龙

You let me run naked among the crowds
Fall from the rooftop into the sea
I believe this dream believe
You are once again beating the back of my head with disgusted eyes
The whole reason for this
I am in fact you

- III. When I made up my mind to be a good student the next day
At midnight the alarm clock surely suffered arrest
I went to become a worker laboring dutifully for my living
Who thought I'd be asked to wave a baton
I would like to be a good husband
But sausage is always sold out
I don't know why
The world is always working against me
Myself, I'd just as soon *be* a good-for-nothing
So I make up my mind to come to terms with it all
To come to terms with you
Then all of a sudden you turn your back on me and head out

In short it's not surprising the noon sun gets mixed with the rain
Look the raindrops glisten in sunshine
As harmonious as two tramps
So while we're alive we should quit quibbling about the world
Don't you agree why don't you say anything you
Palm tree in the wind

纪念航天飞机挑战者号

这一瞬间改变了什么
 这模样古怪的混血儿
 突然失踪借助烟霭浓浓的掩护
 天空晴朗以后天空中闪闪亮亮
 布满铝片骨肉碎屑尖锐的声音
 没消化完的早餐三明治
 天空中闪闪亮亮

一缕女人的长发穿过阳光

这一瞬间改变了什么被炸得粉碎你热恋
 中的绝色女郎为你球场上欢乐的舞姿被
 炸得粉碎你的期待你公园免费长椅上最后一个
 衰老的午后被炸得粉碎你总统手中的麦
 克风你椭圆形的腹部刚恢复功能被炸
 得粉碎你恐惧的祈祷你虔诚的诅咒你
 掏空的脑壳被炸得粉碎你能记起的过
 去你没借过钱你被炸得粉碎你再几天
 画展的野心你呕心沥血的理论你迷人
 的胸罩被炸得粉碎你布置在树上的布景灯绳
 和一点点幽默你过份积极的春天你风你潮汐
 你白天黑夜两副面具被炸得粉碎

这一瞬间改变了什么

既然我已经活了三十年象一条狗
 我会拼爹妈会微笑会翻跟斗把脚举起来
 我爱孩子到铁路边去看两条钢轨
 看它们不知向哪里指去从哪来
 我想象远方思念父亲希望退休

IN MEMORY OF THE SPACE SHIP CHALLENGER

What changes take place in this instant
Suddenly under the cover of dense smoke the strange half-breed vanishes
When the sky clears the sky sparkles
Speckled with aluminum scraps, bone bits, flesh, sharp sounds
and undigested breakfast sandwiches
The sky sparkles

A wisp of woman's long hair crosses the sun's rays

What changes take place in this instant Blown to bits You wonderful
lovegift You joyous riot on the football field Blown to bits You
microphone in the President's hand You oval lung just recovering its
use Blown to bits You fearful prayers You pious curses You scooped-
out skull Blown to bits You remembrance of things past You borrow
money from no one Blown to bits You ambition to hold for a few days
an exhibition of paintings You theory that drains all your blood
You charming bra Blown to bits You strings of lights hung on the tree
A little humor You overactive spring You wind You tide You two
masks One for day One for night Blown to bits

What changes take place in this instant

Since I have lived more than thirty years like a dog
I can spell can smile can turn a somersault and lift my legs
I take to watching two steel tracks on the railroad
I see them Wonder where they come from where they go
I imagine a faraway place Miss my father Want to retire

(Stanza continued)

在枕木上跳几步然后走回家去
我能认识回家的路幸福啊
你看我活得真不错象一条狗
千真万确地活着
你呢

可是这模样古怪的混血儿你想
它从出发到粉碎飞过多少距离
经过多少时间我们才听到它散架的声音
它的零件是用石头打磨用骨头雕刻
用泥巴烧制或者用青铜熔液浇铸的吗
为什么我看见天空中布满象形文字
列祖列宗见过的我都见过
在围墙上在海滨沙滩上
在发现自己孤零零的时候
天空中闪闪亮亮
永远不会长大的天使们赤身裸体
你们在天花板上走来走去你们都有翅膀
我的翅膀呢

啾啾翅膀退化了我们没有翅膀
我们有屁股我们一样舞蹈
歌唱弹弓捉老鼠公鸡打鸟猴子爬树
这都千真万确毋庸置疑
我们因此活得真不错
啾啾翅膀退化了我们没有翅膀
我们有手我们也使劲往上伸伸伸伸伸

I do a small dance on the ties and walk home
How happy I am I can find my way home
You see, like a dog, I do not live badly
I am really and truly alive
And what about you

Yet this strange half-breed You imagine
How great a distance it flies from blast-off to blast
How long then before we hear the sound of the blast
Are the spare parts ground out of stone carved in bone
 molded from mud cast in bronze

Why do I see hieroglyphics speckling the sky
I have seen everything my ancestors have seen
On the wall At the beach
When I find myself alone
The sky sparkles
Naked angels never growing up
You wander back and forth on the ceiling You all have wings on your bodies
Where are my wings

O wings have degenerated We have no wings
We do have buttocks We also can dance
Sing for cats seizing mice Cocks crowing Monkeys climbing trees
These are all true without any doubt
We therefore do not live badly
O wings have degenerated We have no wings
We have hands and we reach reach reach reach reach fiercely up

(Stanza continued)

飞天你被扯烂的裙裾长衣由里不断抖落
大量钢板

这一瞬间改变了什么

动机原因结论都会出错 错误是难免的

死人的事是经常发生的

你想他们还会有什么好事

那些现代理性和忘情忘义的低级动物

一个梦才是最重要的

死人的事是经常发生的

为了一个白日梦

你还能期望比这更好的死吗

一个永恒的白日梦

麦考利夫推迟起飞时我曾见你笑嘻嘻地
走下舷梯只有几秒钟电视新闻

你们准备哭泣吗

各位你们准备哭些什么

把眼泪留着到非洲去

那里有沙漠无边的火焰一支支仙人掌

黝黑的手上开放着无数肮脏的空碗

你们使劲地哭

用眼泪拯救良心则有各命运吧

而我要去参加一场盛大的庆典

庆祝人类又一次失败的纪录

庆祝死亡

为了白日梦的死亡

From torn sleeves and trains you flying Apsaras ceaselessly shake down
Great masses of copper coins
What changes take place in this instant
There will be mistakes in motivations causations conclusions
Mistakes are inescapable
Incidents of death are regular occurrences
For the sake of a daydream
What kind of death do you expect that is better than this
An eternal day dream

I have seen McAuliffe walk smiling down the gangway
When the flight was postponed the show took only a few seconds on TV news

Are you ready to weep
What will you weep about, ladies and gentlemen
Keep your tears for Africa
In Africa there are deserts, endless fire, stalks of cactus
And many empty dirty bowls blossoming on black hands
You cry as hard as you can
Save your conscience with tears Bribe fate
But I shall go and be part of a great celebration
To celebrate another record of human failure
To celebrate death
The death of a day dream

(Stanza continued)

各位请看现代子弹比弓箭更难地射杀太阳
 科学以轰炸机的肚子钻去就变成狼孩
 海上行动着舰队海洋占地球面积四分之三
 一些手指狂妄地摇晃在电钮上
 围绕这几根手指将升起蘑菇般无法解释的乌云
 可是让我们举行庆典
 庆祝这一瞬间
 庆祝这生命大爆炸
 和平的礼花

说实话你有点象那些该死的炸弹
 我看见一位女教师走了出来
 因此你只是有点象

这一瞬间改变了什么
 天空晴朗以后天空中闪闪亮亮
 布温岛群这有了武器才有的
 象形文字向我飞来。
 啾啾男人女人穷人富人
 有权有势者没权没势者
 最文明的巴黎人安达曼岛上的土人
 向我们飞来向我们降落
 梦和翅膀将回到我们肩上
 我们有肩膀吗

Ladies and gentlemen Please look
Modern bullets kill the sun more accurately than arrows
Science becomes a wolf child once it crawls from the bomber's belly
On the sea the fleet maneuvers
The sea takes three-fourths of the earth's surface
Some fingers dangle presumptuously over the pushbuttons
Around them arises the dark inexplicable mushroom cloud
But let us hold a celebration
To celebrate this instant
To celebrate the great explosion of life
The fireworks for peace

To be honest you're a little like those damn bombs
I watch a woman teacher walk out
So you're like them only a little

What changes take place in this instant
When the sky clears the sky sparkles
Speckled with flocks of pigeons, hieroglyphics born after the birth of weapons
They fly toward me
O Man Woman Poor Rich Powerful Powerless
The most civilized Parisians The natives of Andaman Islands
They fly and descend toward us
Dreams and wings will return to our shoulders
Do we have shoulders

Wang Xiao-long

Encountering the New Chinese Poetry

On returning to the States early in 1988 after a semester teaching at Fudan University in Shanghai, Ann Arbor and I found to our surprise little recent Chinese poetry available in translation: few individual poems and even less in collections. Shu Ting had appeared in *Poetry*. Bei Dao had a cluster of poems in *APR* in the fall of 1988. The Beijing/New York/Beijing art exchange organized by Stephen Lane resulted in a volume of Chinese poems, *Beijing: New York* (New York: Coyote Press, 1988; ed. Ginny MacKensie), but the nature of the project led to a maximum of one page per poet. This general unavailability is changing quickly, both with increased American travel to China and increased visits to the United States by Chinese poets, critics, and academics. In the fall of 1988, for example, the Committee for International Poetry sponsored a tour of six American cities by a group including Bei Dao and Gu Cheng. There has also been little commentary on the process of writing/publishing/reading. Perry Link describes the political/literary complex in the introduction to his anthology of post-Cultural Revolution literature, *Stubborn Weeds* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1983), which includes some of the poets here, but is already five years old.

The lack of contemporary Chinese poetry in translation encouraged us to publish in this chapbook the poems we had worked on while at Fudan. Since one interesting and unusual aspect of our project is its collaborative nature, I will, at the risk of spending more time on process than on product, describe how we came to do this work, providing along the way one glimpse of the current state of poetry in the People's Republic.

It was through Sun Li, the Chair of the Department of Foreign Languages at Fudan, that we began the translations. Shortly after we arrived in Shanghai I asked him if he knew anyone who might talk with us about contemporary Chinese poetry. Shaking his head slowly,

wringing his soft hands — another strange request from new foreign teachers that he as an administrator would have to deal with — he said no, but that he'd make enquiries. That night he asked his daughter, a senior in high school; she gave him *Meng Long Shi Xuan*, checking off some of her favorite poems. The next day Sun Li offered us his help. He knew none of these poems or poets himself and had done no reading in the field. Given the compartmentalization of Chinese universities, students and faculty, his willingness to work with us was a delightful surprise.

Though I articulated no goals to myself, what I had intended in asking Sun Li for guidance was multifold. In our department at Fudan, foreign faculty had offices on one floor, Chinese on another. I wanted to see if we could get to know more closely some of our Chinese colleagues. I also thought we as poets and editors might gain some sense of contemporary Chinese poetry. And having begun our study of Chinese language with the usual tones and characters, what better way to continue and expand than by combining our linguistic and aesthetic interests. Finally I imagined access to a broad range of cultural issues, handled perhaps indirectly and not therefore self-censored by those still concerned about their conversations with foreigners.

Why Sun Li became involved I wasn't sure. Initially and most immediately, working with us may have provided a chance for a change of scene. I've been told there is no word in Chinese for "privacy." As department chair, he shared his office with at least seven colleagues; sitting with us in the office we shared with only two others must have seemed luxurious. I assume that he welcomed the opportunity for cross-cultural contact with American colleagues. He had spent a year in Pennsylvania in the early 80's and relished the refreshing of memories and recognition of shared experience. Perhaps he also had some interest in learning about contemporary poetry, but he gave absolutely no indication that this was part of his intention. Early in the process, in my most cynical moments and with warnings in mind from friends with previous Chinese teaching experience, I thought perhaps he could put us under his authority, perhaps keep us under surveillance. That fear quickly disappeared. When I later shared a draft of this essay with him, he responded that it was merely his continual fascination with the use of language which led him to work with us.

Not that any special motivation was necessary. For a Chinese academic the freedom to sit in a room with foreigners and talk about ideas and art must have provided a strong impetus on its own. From many colleagues we heard of the monotony of academic life during the Cultural Revolution. No teaching took place, in the sense of holding classes. At best professors might be left alone, to find a book to read, a new language to learn. At worst, if they were not personally threatened, there would be hours sitting together and talking about those few topics which were not politically dangerous. If they were threatened, there was no worst. Anything could happen.

In these early sessions Sun Li chose a poem more or less arbitrarily. His glasses perched half-way down his nose, his tea mug printed with tiny goldfish in one hand, he would recite the poem in Chinese, then begin to work through it line by line. Ann took verbatim notes. Later I would type from her notes a rough draft on the redoubtable Flying Fish office typewriter. The original went to Sun Li, with a carbon for us. We had only rare use of a xerox, no easy access to a computer. Later we would sit down again with Sun Li and modify our rough version. Very soon it was apparent that writing by hand was too slow; Sun Li would race ahead and then have to wait. So I began typing as Sun Li talked, making notes for alternative interpretations as he went, with Ann making her own set of notes for comparison.

Listening to Sun Li do these literal translations was wonderful. His English had all the richness of a brilliant foreign speaker who has spent years holding dictionaries on his lap. Indeed he often would dash down to his office and return with three Chinese/English dictionaries, place one on the couch, balance another on his knee, and scan the third held just inches away from his eyes. His vocabulary was immense and precise, his phrasing elegant. Like many older foreign speakers, his English was British — more reminiscent of Victorian novels than the often staccato sounds of American street language. Despite his accent, however, the poems on first reading often seemed more American than British: more colloquial, more abrupt in vocabulary and syntax.

* * *

The first poems we translated with Sun Li were mostly shorter pieces by a variety of poets. Their appeal to a high school senior was

obvious: poems of individual longing, absent love, isolation, cynicism, and affirmation. Their characteristic tone was the "haziness" of the Meng Long title imposed earlier upon them by critics, the "Schwaermerei" of a former European generation. Though the language was direct, the poems didn't "say" anything; there was no obvious meaning, no political message.

In addition to creating these "hazy" poems, the poets at times used the same colloquial language to speak directly of their beliefs, or their lack of beliefs. Or they wrote explicit political poems, praising the country but also criticizing it. About these poems there was nothing at all ambiguous. Even in the selective reading we were doing, the diversity was substantial.

As a source of poems for a student generation on the verge of change, the anthology was like Donald Allen's *New American Poetry* in 1960 (how vividly I remember standing in a library in Germany, discovering Greg Corso's "Marriage"), or maybe for the more academically inclined, the Hall, Pack, and Simpson collection of the same era. Both presented new worlds, uncharted ways of seeing. Like the Allen anthology, *Meng Long* made some pretense at describing a "school," but what its curriculum contained was vague. We could sense why certain poems appealed to Sun Li's daughter. But what did we see in it? Ambiguity towards happiness and grief. Political poems, but bittersweet ones. Certainly not rampant nationalism. Multiple opinions. Dialogue, as in the Shu Ting/Bei Dao pair in this chapbook.

As I quickly discovered, all my students were familiar with these poems. They had read them, knew poets' names, could recite sections by heart. Different poems touched different readers, but they touched. None of my colleagues, however, said they knew them. Not one. True, they were professors of English, not Chinese. But in a highly structured and disciplined society, here was one very strong generational demarcation.

Perhaps because of the novelty of the material, Sun Li quickly became enthusiastic about the process, and about the poetry. As he finished reading a poem he would sometimes say, with a slight glance of surprise, "That's quite good." And as we closed each session he would thank us; we would thank him. Then he would say "You have no idea what a pleasure this is for me." Our once-a-week session became two. Each of these sessions soon lasted two hours.

After perhaps five such meetings, Sun Li mentioned that he'd like to have someone join us. To our next session he brought Chu Meng-dan. Chu was a third-year English major at Fudan, not Sun Li's student, but someone who had impressed him when he, as Department Chair, interviewed her the previous year to hear her argument for changing her major from history to English. Chinese students don't do such things. Chu did.

She was an extraordinary young woman. Widely read, interested in everything, forcefully stubborn, with a way of looking at us out of the side of her eyes when she believed she was right and we were wrong, Chu very quickly changed the nature of our work.

The first piece we tackled with her was Bei Dao's "Island." Compared to the ones we had been working on, this poem was longer, more complex, more difficult, more vague, more allusive, more mysterious. We read, reread, translated, retranslated, interpreted, reinterpreted. Perhaps because of Chu, perhaps because of "Island," we for the first time began to deal with a poem which was getting lost in the translation. Like most good poems, this poem resided in the language; some of the earlier ones had seemed to float above it: graspable, rewritable, translatable.

"Island" wasn't like that. From beginning to end, there were impossible tasks. Even the title was problematic. Perhaps following the examples of earlier writers, many younger Chinese poets use pseudonyms. Many of the names are symbolic: Duo Duo is "Much Much." Lan Se is "Blue." Bei Dao is "Northern Island." The title of his poem in pin yin Chinese is "Dao" — equivalent to the poet's name. One must, of course, translate the title, but does one translate the poet's name as well? Should this poem be "Island," by the poet "Northern Island"? An important poem which included the poet's own name in the title might seem autobiographical (imagine a poem "Rich," or "Frost"), and indeed "Island" reads like much Western autobiographical/confessional poetry — allusive, seemingly specific and yet delightfully/frustratingly vague. And yet both Sun Li and Chu Meng-dan asserted it referred more directly to Yu Luo-ke, a young man killed by the Gang of Four. Was the poem autobiographical or not?

A second issue was the sound. Much like parts of Kinnell's *Book of Nightmares* or Plath's *Ariel*, the closing lines of the poem use internal rhyme subtly and beautifully:

yǒu lé wú zuì de tiān kōng jiù gòu le

yǒu lé tiān kōng jiù gòu le

tīng ba, qín

zài zhāo huàn shī qù de shēng yīn

In the first of these short stanzas the repetition makes its own powerful, yet conventional, music. In the second, the "qin" and "yin" rhyme, but the "ting" and "sheng" nearly rhyme, both with each other and with the end-rhymed pair. How to capture such sound in so few words?

A third was the imagery. In those same closing lines one of the rhyming words is "qin," any stringed instrument. English has no comparable word. A specific image, such as "lute" or "violin," would be inaccurate, and yet a general reference, such as "instrument," doesn't capture the partial specificity. Furthermore, "qin" suggests not only the stringed instrument but also the music created by it. Again and again we found ourselves failing with "Island"; again and again we tried to minimize the depth of failure.

Soon after we began to work with Chu she visited us at our dormitory. With her she brought Lu Wen, her close friend. Lu's nickname was Xiao-mi, the cat. Her poised actions, her careful speech, the tilt of her round face, were cat-like; in her patience she contrasted strongly with the intense, impulsive, quick-moving Chu. And like a cat not deigning to concede interest in that ball of string, Lu Wen only slowly admitted her own interest in poetry.

And then they came with their classmates, Li Yi-dong and Zuo Hong. Li seemed like a city kid: street-wise, a bit tough, with a masculinity rather different from the intellectual elegance of most of our male Fudan students. Zuo was stylish, wearing bright red, with a matched set of hat and mittens. She was also very bright, inquisitive. For these students, at least, in a culture lacking the leisure time, expendable income, and video/audio gadgetry of Japan and the West, poetry was an important intellectual and emotional experience. More than rock stars and sports figures, the poets were the voices of many young Chinese; their words were on our students' tongues in the way that Western teenagers sing contemporary songs.

* * *

All our new acquaintances had specific poets/poems they wanted us to read. Better still, Li Yi-dong had a poet he wanted us to meet: his next door neighbor at home in Shanghai, Wang Xiao-long. Wang, he said, knew all the poets we were reading, and was one of the best of the newer school. *Meng Long*, widely available for only two years, was already out of date. And would we like to translate one of Wang's poems? All of Li's emphatic energy sounded a bit like special pleading: this was after all his neighbor, perhaps his friend. And yet, so what? With virtually no Chinese of our own, and no easy access to sources of or information about contemporary poetry, we depended on chance encounters and volunteers. Li's intensity was contagious. We soon began work on "In Memoriam," Wang's elegy for his father. Two weeks later Li said Wang would like to visit us himself.

We were pleased, and yet we did not know quite what to make of Li Yi-dong's offer. This was a different type of encounter, with someone who was not connected to Fudan, who spoke no English. Since Wang would visit after university hours, Sun Li would not be there. So we asked our tutor/friend Hu Meng-jie, a former Fudan-Beloit exchange student, to translate and to provide an external point of view. We wanted someone there we knew well who could later help us understand what we had missed and misunderstood.

Wang came in the evening, riding his bicycle two hours across Shanghai. Chu, Lu, Zuo, and of course his neighbor Li, were with him when he arrived. The eight of us sat in a circle in one of our two rooms. Ann and I were excited. The university was treating us very well, but all our contacts there were part of the official structure. Wang was the first poet we had met; he had come here on his own. We had no idea how the evening would go, but he owed us nothing, we owed him nothing. When we asked our usual social/sociological questions he was willing enough to answer. He "worked," like all Chinese, at his job, but actually his formal job was a sinecure. His real work, recognized by the government and supported, was to be a member of the Writers' Guild, was the writing of poems. He did not, however, feel completely a part of the government. Nothing negative, just a sense of being an outsider — and certainly an outsider to the university, with which he had no contact.

Because interpretation is a slow process, we watched Wang a long

time that evening. Thirty-three years old, confident of his power, intense in his observations, with an ironic grin that transcended the time lapse and made us laugh, he was stunningly handsome — combining the impudence of a teen-ager and wisdom of a Taoist monk.

What he wanted most to hear about was poetry. What did we write about? Were we any good? Which Chinese poets did we read? Which Americans? He asked about two poets who had visited Shanghai the previous two years, Allen Ginsberg and Donald Hall. What were their reputations in the States? More emphatically he wanted to know about Bob Dylan, wanted Li Yi-dong to translate some Dylan songs, wanted me to send him copies of lyrics. With his green jacket, almost army surplus, he even looked a bit like Dylan in the early days.

Wang had with him his most recent publication. It was roughly mimeographed on newsprint, with a pencil sketch of the poet on a fold-around paper cover. By American standards it looked amateur, but we knew enough about scarcity of paper and printing facilities to avoid pre-judgment. Many poets publish themselves for years, for both political and economic reasons. The *Meng Long* anthology had originally been done casually by a group of students, and even now was published by a relatively small provincial press, rather than a major Beijing publishing house. We plunged into talk of translating his elegy. His concern for accuracy, the meticulous choice of his own words, convinced us of the intensity of his craft, despite his casual air and the casual tone of the poem itself. We in turn asked so many questions I suspect he began to sense our own commitment to the best translation possible. Like most Chinese males, he smoked throughout the evening, enjoying the best Chinese brand, Peony, until Ann produced some of our duty-free Marlboros, purchased for precisely such moments. Smoking people.

We discussed the possibility of his reading at Fudan. By now we had done enough translation with Sun Li that we thought of doing a performance for the university. And if we were translating Wang's work and presenting it to a Chinese audience, we wanted him to perform the original. Wang said quietly, "I don't think they'll let me read." The politics of his coming onto the campus were delicate. I said I'd enquire.

We shared poems, understanding little from the words, but more from inflection, gesture. He ended by asking if he could read a new, long, poem. Of course we agreed, as much for the Chinese students, who were

sitting entranced by Wang's personality and power, as for ourselves. Even in the small room, with a small audience, he seemed — in an appropriate way — to perform the poem, running through emotional sections, throwing in what we could identify as commercials from mass media, making jokes, and ending in a rush of feeling that seemed to move the students deeply.

The mood was turned by a humorous misunderstanding. Responding to the sounds she had heard, Ann commented quietly to one of the students, "That was beautiful." The student, wrapped in the aura of an evening with a young and dynamic artist, responded dreamily, "Yes, he is, isn't he."

By Chinese standards it was already late, with Wang's bicycle ride back across the city yet to come. We escorted our visitors down four flights of stairs, past the registration desk, out to the compound gate, where we said good-night. At the beginning of the evening we had not known what to make of Wang Xiao-long. By the time he left we had been deeply impressed by his intensity, charisma, commitment to poetry. And at the same time if there had been a test, whatever the test was, we seemed to have passed.

* * *

I mentioned the possibility of our reading with Wang to Sun Li the next time we met. He thought it a good idea. I wondered out loud if there would be any difficulty. He foresaw none. I conveyed the positive response to Wang through Li Yi-dong. We proceeded with our plans. Three times in the coming weeks I asked if there were difficulties. Sun Li finally agreed to check. There were none. At least none I saw. Everything went smoothly. And all of us began to get excited about the public performance.

We continued translating through October and November. Despite the collective nature of our project, everyone in the group had his or her own goals. Li Yi-dong brought us his version of "Christmas," by Lan Se. Zuo Hong liked "Back View" by the same writer, and a sequence by Duo Duo. The bravery of this man's early publication still inspired students and younger poets to say what they believe, at a time when some fear remains that openness, though officially acceptable, might be dangerous.

Understandably, Li Yi-dong wanted us to work on Wang's poems. Lu Wen had begun an ambitious project: translating the long poem Wang had read that evening at our room. Chu had already completed a rough draft of his Challenger poem. As might be expected, the level of English for all these students was not so high as Sun Li's. So our talking sessions became more complex. With a rough draft by Sun Li in hand we could work immediately on tone, texture, style, details of imagery. With the students the possibility existed for complete misunderstanding. Something as simple as "bench" (as in park bench) in a first draft was "freefair chair." And yet, again not surprisingly, Chu and the others were alert to the freshness of language, to contemporary innuendo, in ways that Sun Li was not. Sun Li was in his sixties. The poets were closer to the students' age.

Our collective sessions became extraordinary events in themselves. We have some snapshots: Sun Li holding the dictionary close to his eyes, the others grouped behind him listening respectfully but ready to recognize and emphasize the limitations of dictionaries in a culture which in their lifetimes has turned topsy turvy every ten years. In his interaction with the students the stereotype of elder academic authoritarian mandarin was simply not accurate. Sun Li had encouraged Chu to join us and had accepted the others because he knew his limitations, and (though he would never say so) his strengths. I have another snapshot, a mental one this time, of Sun Li and Chu Meng-dan, the senior male professor/administrator and the young female student side by side—sharing, cooperating, collaborating. The intensity of the combination seemed unusual in a culture which emphasizes the virtue of age and often segregates classrooms by gender. Watching Sun Li's respect for Chu, for all of these students, was one of the most positive experiences we had in China.

By late November we had begun to meet in our room. This happened partly because of the separate agendas for translation, partly because it was getting cold and our room was heated. (Fudan student dorms, classroom buildings, offices for Chinese had no heat, though the Shanghai temperature regularly touched thirty degrees.) In addition we had the increasing pressure of an impending performance, with texts to be tentatively "finished" in advance. Sun Li might come two days a week. As many students as could join us did so. In addition Chu and Lu would show up for a two or three hour session one evening. Li and Zuo

Hong would come then and at other times, with word from Wang on some line or idea from his poems. Hu Meng-jie, who had no peer in the group for her combination of contemporary Chinese and contemporary English, had volunteered to check all translations, so she would find her way to see us after all others had finished. And once all of them had left we still had the process of rewriting, polishing, seeing what we didn't understand so we could ask intelligent questions at the next session. What began as one hour a week had become more than twenty. To watch the poems gradually transform from one language to another was to participate in the collective process at its best.

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In the meantime, Wang had become interested enough in our project to write to some of the poets, asking for poems more recent than those in *Meng Long Shi Xuan*. Bei Dao was in England, unavailable. Man Ke, however, sent two, of which we translated "Growing Old Even After Death." And Shu Ting sent a group of four, including "Between..." and "Resurrection." Those she provided were remarkably different from the ones we had seen before. The direct, bitter-sweet appeal of the early poems we had translated, including some of her most popular pieces ("Motherland," "Love Poem Earth") reminded me of many sixties lyrics — Joni Mitchell, Beatles, Dylan. The poems pour out images: direct, powerful, evocative statements. I think of Dylan's comment on "Hard Rain" — where he said every line was a potential poem, but with the fear during the Cuban missile crisis that tomorrow might not happen, there had been no time to write separate songs. With Shu Ting, we had the feeling she feared that yesterday (read Cultural Revolution) wasn't really over, and tomorrow might not be like today but like yesterday or some other disaster. Her greatest strength, it seemed to us, was individual images, and clusters of images around a theme. And yet throughout those poems brilliant lines would fall next to ones no major American poet would think of publishing — what an American audience would regard as sentimental sap. Shu Ting's new poems weren't like that. They were Joni Mitchell's *Hejira*, not *Court and Spark*. The smoke, the fire, of her early work was becoming more complex, a flame burning deep in the earth.

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The new poems sent to us pleased us and once again expanded our work. Most immediate, however, was our reading at Fudan. As it approached, we realized we had undertaken an ambitious project. During our stay in Shanghai, many students, colleagues, and friends had asked Ann and me if we would make a public reading of our own poems. In addition we wished to help feed the hunger for Western culture, to share with the Fudan audience some of the recent American poems we find most powerful and significant. Third, we wanted to present the translations of recent Chinese poems we had been working on for the previous three months, to honor a society and artists we had learned to respect and love. And since some of those poems were by Wang Xiao-long, we had asked him to join us. Earlier we had hoped to split this whole presentation into two performances, but as our teaching term was running out we decided to combine all the events.

One problem with creating such an occasion was length. Such a project would tax the attention of most audiences in the States. We knew, however, that most of our Fudan audience would stay and listen as long as we were willing to speak. Again and again, whenever we indicated a willingness to speak English, to talk either casually or formally with Chinese students, colleagues and staff, or even to linger with pedestrians in downtown Shanghai, the limits of attention were only the limits of time. At the same time we knew this willingness depended on politeness as well as on interest, and we were reluctant to overstay our welcome.

A second problem was space. Formally our presentation would be the final one in a series of talks by foreign faculty. These had been very popular. In a lecture hall which "sat" 250, between 300 and 700 had crowded in each week, surrounding the speakers, standing on desks, jamming five people into the space one student would ordinarily occupy. Occasionally, as a desk crumbled under the weight, we would watch a small wave of people disappear in the sea of faces. Fortunately, the throng was so thick no one could be hurt. It was like riding a bus, where nine people fill a square meter. For our poetry reading, moreover, we could not even have the usual lecture hall, because it had been reserved for the evening by the Fudan poetry society. Some of our student co-workers were afraid two poetry events would undermine each others' audience. Not likely. Although the entire campus population was only about 10,000, over 400 attended the poetry society reading that evening. Another 700 were upstairs listening to us.

The presentation lasted nearly three hours. Sun Li introduced us. We read a few of our own poems, a few by Levertov, Rich, Kinnell and other contemporary Americans, then turned to the contemporary Chinese poets. We invited our co-translators to the podium. Chinese children grow up being expected to perform; at banquets, holiday parties, many social gatherings, a song or a poem is demanded of everyone in the room. I suspect, however, that the 700 colleagues sitting in front of us were a bit intimidating for our student co-workers. Their voices grew very soft; their hands were shaking. So were ours. But the audience was superb. Many of the poems they would recognize immediately; with Gu Chen's "A Generation" I could hear many speaking the poem quietly as it was read.

Finally, we turned to Wang Xiao-long. By then we were all tired. Perhaps a third of the audience had drifted away. But Wang captured those who remained. At the end of an evening of English language, his use of Shanghai dialect, his wit, and his physical presence soon had the audience laughing, and then, with the poem for his father and the Challenger poem, crying. He ended with the long poem he had read in our dormitory, modifying it for the evening with passages specific to Fudan. The audience cheered. And the reading was over. Despite the late hour many of us returned to our rooms for a party. For once the workers at our gate allowed visitors to remain past the 11:30 curfew.

Curfew: We were often aware that even our presence in Shanghai would have been unthinkable fifteen years earlier. And yet: Undergraduate students presenting contemporary poetry, a major poet unconnected with the university reciting his own, overseas visitors contributing translations, even the introduction by the head of the language department — the collaborative nature of the evening at Fudan suggested an openness, a willingness to experiment, that surprised us and our hosts as well. Much of our energy in the previous weeks and months had gone into these translations. The opportunity to attempt such a project and the process by which we worked say much about contemporary Chinese attitudes towards poetry, academic life, Chinese/American relations, collective processes. Through luck, curiosity, intensive work, and Chinese generosity, we were able during our stay in Shanghai to experience the widespread excitement about recent poetry that is part of Chinese society nearly fifteen years after the death of Mao, after the end of the Cultural Revolution.

Two quick notes:

1) Since the People's Republic of China does not participate in any international copyright agreement, there is no international jurisdiction over the Chinese poems we have included. Where possible we have attempted to contact the poets directly, and are grateful for their generous help and advice.

2) I have no idea how to "credit" the translations. They are certainly not "mine," in that I know very little Chinese. They're not Ann Arbor's, though neither the translations nor my narrative would have been possible without her continual journal-keeping and commentary. They aren't the work of our initial and primary collaborator, Sun Li of Fudan University, in that his English, rich and subtle as it was, would not alone have captured the contemporary language of the Chinese poems. The translations owe much to our Fudan student co-workers, Hu, Chu, Lu, Li, and Zuo, who stimulated us, encouraged us, corrected us, pushed us to do more. Former Beloit College Exchange Professor Xu Zheng-tong assisted us by inviting us to talk with Hu Huan-zhang, a noted critic of twentieth-century Chinese literature. Yang Chen of the Fudan English Department interpreted for us and made our lives more pleasant in a hundred ways. Once we were back in the States the project could not have proceeded without the support of Marion Stocking and other *BPJ* editors, and from Chinese students at Beloit College, especially Song Hai-huan, and our tutor Pang Ying, who graciously agreed to do the calligraphy and provided many types of assistance during the final stages of preparing the chapbook. The final credit should go where it most belongs: to the poets themselves especially Wang Xiao-long, who made our efforts possible in the most fundamental sense.

John Rosenwald