

Are You Becoming Critically Endangered?

Do you collect shiny objects? When alarmed what plea do you make? Why do people in your city have a penchant for joking? What is a group of you called, as in: *a siege of cranes* or *a lamentation of swans*?

Can you be shot legally? When was the last time you congregated in large numbers to unlearn self-censorship? Which factor is the most important in determining your carbon footprint?

Do you deploy infrasonic rumbling to communicate with others? Are you as a people a symbol of anything universal? What prominent mythologies are associated with your city?

Can you put two systems together? Is it true that collectively you have great long-term memory but sometimes you opt for feigning amnesia out of insecurity about security?

How do you vote within your packs? In times of contention, which groups of you have a remarkable ability to convert themselves into warriors, revealing tough scales, beaks, horns, or words?

Whose antlers are used to make handles of umbrellas? If you roar to mark or defend your territory, how far can your roar be heard from? What help is available for someone suffering from a phobia?

Are you social animals, like penguins, living in colonies? How long does it take to empty your city of its essence and ethos? What percentage of democracy have you explored and mapped to date?

If you were to give your mouth a name—such as Aristotle's lantern—what would that be? Approximately how many years does it take to rebuild demolished piers? Who are your power-driven predators?

How many broods of young can your government imprison? Is your city

now one of the largest global producers
of migrants? How many heart and time
zones must your city contain?

Saturday 22 October 2022

Removed and Rectified

you read from a distant life
it's almost back to normal
calligraphy meets glass tubes

meets flames meets memories
bright above the heads
of those who know customs

and those who stray for a while
like a garage dog or a shop cat
all things advertised: bridal

medicinal, gambling, pawning
lust in multifaceted incarnations
life is almost back to normal

on strict government orders
neon signs, glamorous, decadent
continue to come down

local trade and visual history
backdrop to at once futuristic
and nostalgic filmic wastelands

loudest and most towering
that once stood out now hang
on museum walls or reproduced

in miniatures in living rooms
from a distance your regular bus
going under the signs

you remember now takes others
to their own lopsided homes
no gatherings allowed

on strict government orders
to divert its route
regular people's feet

can't make more hopeful manifestos
for a while you read from a distance
life is almost back to normal

Friday 21 October 2022

Teapot, Broth, Body

My city is a famed teapot.
Inside, it's darkly stained—
the colours and flavours of past
sovereigns and leaves. Every
new brew already decades old,
telling of disappointed prophecies.

My city is a boiling broth—
an everlasting stew of local bones,
foreign teeth, and ancient poison.
It's been years, this gruesome
business grinding freedoms into
fresh, urgent phantoms.

My city is a body with several tongues,
too clumsy to all fit in a stunned,
shut mouth. Words that emerge,
come out in fits and terror. Its heart
has no suburbs; all year round
it's a burning, rioting season.

Tuesday 19 October 2022

NOTE: Read the Word “Note” Aloud

Note: This is not the actual cover of the book

They removed the offensive artwork
and the title, which appropriates a slogan
currently deemed obsolete. *Note: Some page
are reluctantly left blank* The writers and artists
and lawyers and professors who contributed
the material were no longer in a position
to grant us permission, either by choice
or due to death. *Note: On account
of the authenticity of “the event” being challenged,
the same said event was redacted* This erasure
applies also to poetic names of streets
which must now be metaphorical, anonymous:
miles through the snubbed streets, chaotic
classified scenes unfold in streets
that are themselves arteries threatened
to be folded up, goods and gods thrown
onto the streets, grievances on the streets
continuing into and beyond October.

*Note: There is a Cantonese note of Cantonese
contempt in some Cantonese witnesses’*

Cantonese verdicts A valid proof
that the language is versatile, versifiable
and not an error in printing. *Note: No pages
should be on display or reproduced*

The aforementioned event is a historical
placeholder, a splendid anomaly, defined
by a bold tone of definite pitch
made once by the people's voice.

Friday 14 October 2022