

## **Village Night**

Night is cool in the fields  
The setting sun holds onto the last red ray

Palm leaves fan, not on treetops  
But in the hands of the village

Night is here. I put down my chores  
Farm tools are abandoned  
In the fields. A tiny  
Bug crawls onto  
The farmer's thick hand

The old well stays awake  
As the white dog lingers  
In the village, through the floating night

## Fieldnotes of Food

Time, no matter how long, can't  
Straighten the shadow of a crooked back

The goose-feather snow  
Can't erase a pair of lonely footprints

Along a thin road, you seek  
Food in earth, carrying a lantern

A grain of rice is enough to keep  
A crowd of hungry men full all night

A grain of rice is enough  
To light up a shabby hut in full glory

Without food  
No one can make a single fart

Keep the grain under your finger. Wind blow away  
All the words, but can't move the paper

Resting in the husk, I'm worried  
About the rat in *The Book of Songs*

It gnaws into my books  
Into your yellow shell, into your dreams

## **Black Leaves**

Maybe it's the wind  
Maybe not  
But the whole tree is shaking its black leaves

On the mat some rice is drying in the sun  
Maybe there's no rice at all

But a school of black leaves blew  
Blowing away my rice  
Blowing away my dreams off the mat

At night, an empty stomach  
Waits under the tree, full stomachs resting above

In my dream the wind seems blowing  
Maybe not, only black leaves flying  
Across the empty mat, up and down  
But the mat is not moving  
It's the beach by the river

No, the beach is not moving  
It's the ripple rippling on the other shore

No, the ripple is not rippling across the river  
It's the soul trembling

## **Insomnia of Lightning**

I've been drowning in the insomnia  
Of black coffee since afternoon

No sugar into the sleepless night  
Or into the lightning of  
Your inner world

Your flash of insomnia  
Electricity cutting through your life  
Your intricacy and your bitterness  
Tears fly low to the earth

The afternoon is drowned  
Without a story

Oh, my darling  
I only have a lightning as thin as a grassroot  
My afternoon begins with a cup of black coffee  
Ends with a lightning

## **Leaving**

Suddenly I turn into ashes  
Suddenly I become a rat  
Or a weeping worm

The longer I stay the emptier I become  
Till nothing is left but smoke  
Empty, silent

Time to leave  
I need to leave this place now...

## **Watching It Wither**

A rose is withering  
In light  
Its sorrow is the dull pain  
Brought by the setting sun

Today I am withering  
I feel a woman is jumping into a river somewhere

I bought a rose  
To watch it fade. I see  
A woman drown in the river

I heard along the dark riverbanks, there are  
More dead-fish eyes than stars in the sky

## **I Watch Your Grasses Moving**

You empty your heart, but I feel sad  
When you go blind, I feel empty  
You hide in tall grasses  
Your knife  
Feels soft

Oh, my blood can't run out of the skin  
My tears can't be shed  
The smoke keeps circling inward...

You look like my father and brother  
And my friends  
What kindness piles on your glasses?  
Your face is crowded with dubious wealth  
I see your grasses moving, I hear  
Hunted beasts  
Rumble in terror

## Lingering at Hainan

Today I just want a bowl of noodles  
The coconut breeze is as soft as the southern music  
A piece of glass, so blue

Peace between water and salt

Pieces of paper are flying  
White birds whirling, more real than paper

In a space no one can reach

Deep sleep...  
But today I  
Just want a bowl of noodles

I enter the island through my last grains of rice from Hubei  
I can't deny: I see the island's sky  
"Swishing—" into the landscape of post-industrial country

But today  
When the black screen is shut off from the "future"  
Today all day  
I gaze at the coconut. My attention goes  
To the smooth coconut  
--sour, perhaps  
But I don't care

For a whole day today, I feel clean

At dusk I borrow a bird's nest for the night  
I dream of birds flying around my dreams  
Kakakakaka  
The birds didn't return to their nest  
I dream my dreams are hatching their eggs

A bird  
Flying  
In sixth dimensional space

Tonight  
I can't close my eyes

Tonight  
I think about the bird



More than my wife  
Tonight I go over my "lessons" word by word  
Tonight, I'm hungry, but I refuse to eat the eggs

The sun shines on me lightly  
Like a beach in mirage, after the tide

I learn to wade into the hard water of the self  
I wake up

The moon is high  
The sun is shallow

## Daddy Waits

Your steps wake up the stairs  
You shake up my room of depression  
You  
I know it's you, Son

You're a shaft of light  
A chirping sparrow  
You're a shy bud  
A cloud dropping out of the blue sky

You turn a small gold key  
And unlock your daddy's security door  
Oh, it's you I turn my head  
Gazing  
--from head to toe  
Everyday I look at you, in surprise  
As if I've never met you  
I gaze at you  
From section to section  
Look at you as a whole

What? You got hurt today? And tears?  
They didn't let you play with them?  
Unless you pay them?

--Son it's not your fault  
That you can't get along  
They're strong and arrogant, right?  
They're always like that in the adult world too  
It's the same come here son  
Daddy will play with you let's play  
A triangle game, a jumping game, chess,  
A marine warfare game...

What? No? Still want to play with them?

All right, wipe your eyes  
Go and try again  
Daddy will wait at home

## **That Day**

So much anxiety after Mother was buried  
So much fear  
Under the white sun

You died, Mother  
My wound was buried with your body  
Your black bones have my batting sticks

That day  
I carried the wind  
I carried white eyes

Empty basket

That day, I was empty  
That day, I was weightless  
That day, I was all bones  
That day, I was full of fear

My sister was still young  
My other sister was married  
I went out to gather vegetables for pigs

Lilies, shepard purse, spinach  
Come out, hurry  
Alfafa, plantain, ground covers  
Don't hide yourselves  
I'm coming

Seek  
Seek seek seek seek  
I filled half of my basket

The sun entered the earth  
My little sister wanted her mother

Don't be afraid  
Big brother will take you home

Brother, your hand is cold  
Brother, you're crying  
Sister, you have no idea  
what kind of fear I have in my heart

That day  
The world changed  
The white sun pushed me down  
Water carried me  
----away

That day, I was all bones  
That day, I was weightless  
That day, I was empty  
That day, I was afraid  
The world was a net full of holes

## Forgive Me

After the business, I realize I forgot the toilet paper

I didn't forget my book  
Didn't forget my pen  
Didn't forget my phone  
But I forgot the toilet paper

Holding Marcus Aurelius's *Meditations*  
I try to decide which page to tear  
Flipping through the whole book  
Every page is important  
Every page can't be parted with  
I love books  
Tearing a book shows disrespect  
No, it's a crime  
Especially when used as toilet paper

So I squat, alone  
A minute, two minutes...a decade  
Nothing can be done about it  
My heart is filled with guilt

I've been feeling guilty ever since  
So sorry, Marcus  
Whenever I open your *Meditations*  
I see the missing page  
I see that day  
A man squatting in the bathroom  
Full of pain, glaring at me  
With his Roman Emperor eyes