

Up to The Sky

Countless peaks, on the way to the sky.
Hundreds of millions of years, they've done an excellent job.

I too am on the way to the sky,
when I appear on the peak, sweating profusely,
I too am above the clouds.

What is in the sky?
Mountain and I are looking up. On the earth,
a sea of peaks undulates. No void could make us
so obsessed. Even so,
the highest peak knows no better than
the shortest one.

I come down the mountain, looking back,
it has grown taller.
Someone is still climbing and will arrive
at the place that I had never been.
Perhaps the one from a higher place, one day,
will bring the answer down to our world.

Summer Flower

The south wind sent over my lover,
with her sweet-looking shadow.
I rode a bicycle, taking her to see my mother.
Along the way, every time she spoke,
her weight diminished.
She went to pee and came back
from behind an awning of plants. She was happy.
After the rice plants flowered, one by one
the golden Buddha lotuses started blooming,
from buds like sound-control buttons, imbued with
mystery of summer and a touch of shyness.

The Book of Early Autumn

Breaths are drawn on the verandah, birds swoop by,
Branches swaying, wind gripping.

The waterfront is far away;
I visit an even further era, where an ex-monk
is an excellent carpenter; on a table
a round-bottomed doll dozes off.

-- How to write a poem? Perhaps
whatever happened is the truth.
Here at this moment, on the wall, vines
are blooming, lion cubs playing.
On the highway, someone
is stepping hard on the gasoline, forcing the horizon
to spit out undigested places in the distance.

Snake

It loves to meditate.
Its body stretches longer and longer in time.

It also loves to shift quietly
beyond our attention, which is why
it has no feet,
leaves no footprints.

When it curls up, as if situated
at the still center of ripples,
from which circles expand outward
that is its way to deal with loneliness.

It sheds skin, turning pain into
comprehensible truth: an overcoat dangling
high on a branch. Once again it goes
the way of its old self, lifting its head

to look into the distance—looking
below our knees.
Its probing tongue is like a flame, but free from
emotional bondage.

It follows our music, occasionally, and dances
but most of the time it doesn't
associate with us. It stays in a cave, by the water,
like a silent monk,

yet it gets angry and irritable. If offended,
it believes only one doctrine: teeth
are superior in utility to all languages.