

**James NA**  
**POEMS**

**Tug-of-War**

As a child, with playmates I played  
Tug-of-war, a game of strength  
Counting on energy and footing  
I was highly confident, sure to win or else

After middle age, tug-of-war became a life routine  
Confidence shaken, reluctantly  
Against the environment, against reality  
I played tag-of war lots of times  
Resulting in more defeats than wins

At old age  
Tug-of-war is still inevitable  
But now, there is a stronger, greater  
Terminally confidence crushing  
Opponent –  
Death

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## Between This Theory and That Theory

After reading the twenty-eighth page of the will  
    Blood spattered upon the sky  
    The sword inserted over the grave

The Cross trembled  
Holy Spirit at heart  
    So everything perished as a camellia withered  
Some wept in desolate field  
Some slice the fingers open  
    Bit the lip apart  
And the world seemed so puny

When the universe was in siege by the bloody crimson fog of Westminster  
Between this theory and that theory  
    Some chose Heaven  
    Some chose hell

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Translated from the Chinese by Shirley Lua/Zhifu Qian/John Sy/Zhizhong Zhang  
From the collection *The Wild Plant*