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## Five poems (in Traditional Chinese with English translation)

〈無傷〉	No Scar
細雨後街燈亮起·你 也醒來·向光點了點頭	the street lights go on after the rain, and you wake too, nodding to the lights
可以把胸骨塞回皮肉下了 打呵欠止血·打噴嚏吹掉傷痕	put your sternum back under your skin a yawn will stop the bleeding, a sneeze blow away all scars
而樹未倒下來·你下班再路過 停住：想看幾片又一年的落葉	the trees have not yet fallen, walking by after work you stop: you wish to see the leaves of another year fall
卻見葉子飛回枝頭·你仍守著崗位 代替在此受傷的同事：昨天也有塌樹	but they fly back to their branches, you sticking to your post on behalf of an injured colleague: the tree that fell down yesterday
工人們收拾電鋸·斷樹們一一接合自己 那麼雨水是朝天灌溉的·陽光是收成	workers put away their saws, let felled trees re-affix themselves and rain water the sky, sunlight become their harvest
而你正坐在管理處·面對噪音投訴 有時勸解·有時只好同怨	you sit in management's office, face noise complaints head on sometimes by mediation, sometimes complaining as well
像當保安前·待業時你總是 清早躺著聽鄰居鑽牆、敲鑿	the way that before you became a guard, looking for a steady job you'd lay awake at dawn, listening to the neighbors drill and chisel through the wall

*Translated from the Chinese by Chris Song*

## 〈訪九龍城飛馬餐廳〉

## Visiting Flying Horse Restaurant in Kowloon City

走下隧道·打樁機仍在  
 頭上錘造城市·我們  
 腳步聲散漫·沿道壁敲傳  
 像假期一天天延期後  
 才從裂縫中重逢自己  
 隧道往前捲動·不只一道  
 梯級垂至·一群中學生奔下  
 校服與嘻笑之間·你從眾人中  
 初識我·發覺彼此皆笨拙於  
 笑·像比他們早活在成年——  
 一個時代溜掉·現在我們相視  
 力追·瞎跑了一圈·生命  
 猶在陌生的原處·向逆行的  
 老夫婦問路·拾級時不忘回瞥  
 空無——大小汽車依序繞行  
 把街角圍成孤島·我們步過  
 一所教會·大門網上鐵鍊  
 島尖有多座水泥花槽  
 厚葉飽吸車塵·像餐廳外  
 桌面蓋上灰朦的玻璃  
 隱約壓住近日報章·字間  
 有蟻·自政事爬向娛樂  
 等候我們吃喝中遺落餘食——  
 花生醬吐司沾上焦苦  
 你取喝我的煉奶奶茶  
 甜濃得不近現實·老闆  
 一頭銀白·潛返雜物後  
 煎煮出紫音·油香薰染  
 鐘擺、鳥籠、投幣遊戲機  
 我們相視·你問我是不是  
 來錯了——老闆笑吃三明治  
 出來找續零錢·遠多於我  
 所記得·他沒理會我  
 及鄰桌上靜待收拾的杯碟  
 回去沖調咖啡·給自己

Walking down the tunnel, pile-drivers  
 drill through the city above my head. Our footsteps  
 slacken and resound along the walls like a holiday  
 put off day after day until I find myself again in the crack.  
 The tunnel rolls forward. More than one stairway  
 reaches down. Kids in school uniform rush in  
 merrily. You meet me in the crowd and we  
 clumsily smile, as if we too are  
 young again just like the kids—Time slips away.  
 Now we stare at each other. We each try to catch up  
 with the other. We blindly run around. Life  
 is still in its strange original place. Ask  
 an old couple for direction. Climb up the stairs,  
 not forgetting to glance back at the emptiness.  
 Surrounded by cars big and small, a street corner  
 becomes a traffic island. Past a church  
 and its shackled gate. Many flowerbeds  
 cramped at the tip of the island. Thick leaves  
 breathe in car exhaust, like outside the restaurant  
 the table's grey glass tabletop. Pressed beneath are  
 yesterday's papers. Ants crawl between  
 the lines, from Politics to Entertainment  
 waiting for our crumbs to fall—  
 Peanut butter toast tastes burnt and bitter.  
 You fetch my condensed milk tea which is  
 improbably sweet and thick. The grey-haired  
 owner sneaks back from the storeroom  
 and makes food sizzle. The scent of oil  
 wafts across a pendulum, bird cages,  
 arcade games. We look at each other. You ask  
 whether we have come to the wrong place—  
 The owner smiles as he finishes his sandwich and  
 comes out to give people more change than I  
 can remember. He ignores me, and the cups  
 and plates left on the table next to ours.  
 Back to his seat. Makes himself a coffee  
 when the pile drivers from across the island take a break.

*Translated from the Chinese by Chris Song*

當孤島對岸，打樁機稍歇

〈迷遇〉

——公屋詩系之三，天水圍北

A Curious Encounter

— *In Tin Shui Wai North*

十字天橋，與另一座十字天橋  
拔河，你在那邊驟念故人，走上  
這邊已忘掉。立定，禱求一線指引  
橋下流失最後一輛車子，橋上空氣

窒止為耳鳴——足球，破風，墜落  
空曠車道，幾個孩子追球奔來  
你扶起摔在面前的，問路時恍然  
你仍聽不見。見他招手，你跟著走

下橋，貨櫃車一輛二輛，震癢腳板  
復通聽感後，他說的第一句話：  
你啲廣東話咁難聽，邊度鄉下架？  
單車徑墊托腳步，白白橫越午後

碎花、卡通角色、純色，棉被  
浴了光，癱睡像把國旗燙平在  
國旗，你們周遊列國，拐彎  
入邨又坐下，領匯商場涼蔭中

長凳上旁人漸多，迫你融失自己  
他舔著冰淇淋回來，一時認不出  
有多老的才是你——一棵棵菜乾  
一枚枚蠔豉，生曬在相鄰屋邨

他食味精撈麵，飲汽水，你付款  
像他父母總帶他，擠巴士赴落馬洲  
過關，深圳，大吃大喝度周末  
他更期待假期更長，舉家一直北上

Two footbridges across intersections are locked in  
a tug-of-war. Think of an old friend. Climb up there.  
Forget him. Pause. Pray for a string of hints.  
The last car streams past beneath. The air up here

chokes and rings in the ears—A football cuts through the air and drops  
on the empty road. Several kids are chasing it. The one in the front  
stumbles. You help him up and ask him the way. Mind drifts.  
Still can't hear. He waves hands and you follow him

down the bridge. One or two cargo trucks. Soles tremble and itch.  
Hearing's back. And his first words—  
*Your Cantonese sucks. Where the hell are you from?*  
Cycle tracks carry footsteps and the white shines past the afternoon's

floral patterns, cartoon characters, solid colours, cotton quilts  
that have bathed in sunlight, paralysed like one national flag ironed  
upon the other. Walk past these countries. Take a turn. Go inside  
a housing estate, into the cool shelter forked out by Link REIT.

People mass on the benches. You fear losing yourself among them.  
He's back licking an ice-cream and can't recognise you for a  
moment—  
Who's just old enough to be you?—One cabbage after another,  
one oyster after another, are drying in the sun at a nearby estate.

He devours stirred MSG noodles and knocks back a Coke. You pay the  
bill  
just like his parents take him on a crowded bus to Lok Ma Chau  
across the border to Shenzhen, and eat and drink through the weekend.

不返，像明知起初你問他，那目的地  
並不存在。他現已飽足，恰領你走過  
十字路口，從此正可回眺十字天橋  
你問他有否迷路——傻嘅，我喺度住架

然後在安全島上，你乍見所有方向  
——背向你，你再走不了，你忘掉他  
他不明白，重述你們的腳程——唯你  
僅記起在胸前劃十字聖號，說了阿們

胯下湧滲尿跡，像眼前萬家邨樓  
圍迫間，一道隙縫，只有天空接地  
他慌忙撇下你，過了馬路，輕鐵來去  
逃走路上滾來一個足球。他，踏停它

He wishes for a longer holiday when the whole family can move north  
and never come back, just like you asked him the way to a place  
that did not exist. Now stuffed full he leads you past a crossroad  
where you could turn back to look at the footbridges at the  
intersections.

You ask him if we're lost. *You idiot. I live in the neighbourhood.*

Then on a traffic island, you see all directions turn  
their backs on you. You can't go any further. You forget him.  
He doesn't know how to retrace your path here—only you  
remember to make a sign of the cross and say 'Amen'.

Trousers wet, just like among buildings of ten thousand homes  
a gap of the only sky that leads down to earth.

He loses you in a hurry and crosses the road. Trams come and go.  
On the way of escape rolls over a football. On that he treads.

*Translated from the Chinese by Chris Song*

## 〈上坡·下坡〉

——致屯門青楊街熟食市場

**Up and Down the Slope***For Tuen Mun Tsing Yeung Circuit Cooked Food Market*

青楊街上坡也下坡  
 承擔小貨車接送你  
 上學前放學後  
 返抵工場·更像回家

Up and down Tsing Yeung Circuit,  
 a little truck picks you up  
 before and after school.  
 Back to the workshop is more like a homecoming.

從各自的家起步  
 在工作上遇合  
 在工作以外結合  
 你牽著我冒雨登高

Out of our separate homes, we come  
 together for work  
 and meet again outside of work.  
 You hold my hand in the rain. We climb

沒有多高·工場也不過  
 安頓於熟食市場角落  
 你定睛·魚蛋冉冉升起  
 父的虎口擠造每次日出

a low hill. The workshop  
 takes up only one corner of the food market.  
 You stare at the fishballs bobbing—  
 every sunrise squeezed out of Dad's purlicue.

一把傘子像倒載的船  
 運我倆逆水——工廈浮避  
 因工人們流失多時·無重  
 唯孤島靠爐火殘留洪流中

An umbrella like an upturned-boat  
 carries us upstream—dodging industrial buildings  
 losing workers on a daily basis. No other weight  
 but the lone island with stove-fire left on the stream.

火聲像風·餐具整天交響  
 像成長·伙計食客問話題像  
 父握你的手·教你的虎口  
 也握有日後你兒孫的虎口

Wind sounds like fire. Forks and spoons clatter all day  
 like growing up. What waiters and diners chat about is like  
 Dad holding your hand, showing you the purlicue of your hand,  
 which is also the purlicue of your sons' and grandsons' hands.

我們的手分開了·雨歇  
 條感靜有多深·你低頭  
 對工場故址·後對凍檸樂  
 泡沫熙攘·正呼召昔時盛景——

Our hands pull apart. Sheltering from rain  
 we realise how deep silence can be. You lower your head  
 towards what used to be the workshop, then to cold lemon Cokes  
 fizzing, recalling the hubbub of the place's past.

我自然不在場·熟食市場  
 同一食檔·人群依時回流  
 下午茶·例牌奶油多·驚走  
 包圍父與你·偷閑才像工作

Naturally I wasn't here. The same stall at  
 this food market. People came back on time  
 for afternoon snacks. You and Dad's daily  
 coffee-tea mix and toast, both with condensed milk.

當我在場·食檔送客關門  
街道處處雨窪·摘錄雲變  
和沿街你告訴我的家事  
青楊街上坡·也下坡

Slacking off is more like working. When I was there  
the stall was closed and customers were turned away. Puddles all  
along the street reflect the changing clouds and the family affairs  
that you told me about. Up and down Tsing Yeung Circuit.

*Translated from the Chinese by Chris Song*

## 〈人河〉

*Flow of People*

黑鳥劃過晨光下·你舉過頭  
 追望·雲朵抹淨晴空·渠水  
 浮載墓園的光影·一直彎向你  
 可像那蟻路沿渠邊逆上?  
 你踏上了水窪·藍天便外溢  
 蟻群改道·捲沒另一片天上  
 擱淺的黑鳥——你始見山路上  
 前人的背影·交集後人低垂的臉  
 你始聽見悠悠河聲沖洗山下  
 午後的高樓與街道：開路！開路！  
 像你不曾換上警察制服·仍可涉河  
 也有你猶在的長髮·高舉的拳  
 傳承著浪花·擲向·你——放鬆  
 還是扣緊同袍的手·堅守住路口  
 開路！開路！樓牆受打動了  
 不就是樹？乘你不覺讓出山路  
 一座墳坡兀起·遺照從每面墓碑  
 遠眺·像千家窗戶中生活如昔——  
 飯後舉家移步小公園·圍樹乘涼  
 你喜歡沿樹影邊走·明暗間  
 從兒時繞過來·接過金屬壺  
 才覺成年·走下去發現回不去  
 把家人撒散為圈子·而樹幹  
 始終是時光的軸心·旋來夜幕  
 街燈下人河愈久流愈近於陰影  
 投自城市深處——人臉總背著光源  
 浮沉·背向你忍著淚水所面向  
 漫天煙火在消耗滿城燈火  
 火花飛落·早有一地骨灰在閃動  
 趁午陽照穿枝葉·長輩回頭  
 喚你走出樹影·乘升降機登樓  
 你們沿牆按號碼尋索一個靈位  
 經過眾多逝者在世的位置  
 像走進葉子·循葉脈往葉尖走——  
 碑石上家人沒有病容·倒給逗笑了

Blackbirds flying beneath dawn's light, you hold up your head  
 to look, and clouds wipe clear the sky. The ditch water  
 carrying graveyard shadows; are they arcing towards you  
 like the line of ants up the edge of this ditch?  
 You step in a puddle, blue sky spills out and  
 ants detour, blue rolling up the blackbirds  
 stranded in another slab of sky—on the hill path ahead  
 you see figures of people, faces drooping when you pass,  
 hear the far-off river washing down the hill,  
 the afternoon buildings and the streets: make way! make way!  
 like you never put on a police uniform, yet still wade into the river  
 as if you still had long hair, still raised a fist  
 inheriting the wave, crashing, onto you—to hold on  
 or to let go of your best friend's arm, guarding the intersection  
 make way! make way! the building wall moves  
 is it not a tree? yielding the path under your careless watch,  
 gravestones on the slope, each posthumous portrait  
 looking into the distance, like a thousand windows living in the past—  
 after lunch the family takes a walk in the park, cooling in the shade.  
 you like to walk at the edge of the shadow, between darkness and light,  
 circumventing childhood, realising you're mature  
 only when you're passed the metal jug. Descending you realise there's  
 no return  
 and push your family into a circle, but the branch  
 is always time's axis, revolving night and day.  
 the flow of people under streetlights streams further towards the  
 shadows,  
 cast into the city's depths—everyone faces away from the light,  
 sinking and floating, holding back tears, backs turned to you facing  
 the fireworks that consume all the lights of the city  
 and fall to the ground, where bone ash had been glimmering.  
 noon's light still piercing through the leaves, the elderly look back  
 and call you out of the shade, up the lift  
 to search among the numbers along a wall of ancestral tablets,  
 past so many dead and their worldly positions

那天由你笑起後按動快門。卡嚓！  
 十架刻於小花瓶，伴著碑石  
 你們聊起應該摘來一朵花  
 當你察覺一隻蟻爬出瓶口  
 移向另一塊碑石，話題已轉向  
 樓窗外，順著山勢下望  
 一行樹約略劃分墓園與公共屋邨  
 居民細小得踏著蟻步蠕動  
 碑石簇新，卻只有名字  
 及生卒年月日，你見自己跟逝者  
 同一天出生，不得不轉而盯視孤蟻  
 橫過的空白處，像人河盡頭  
 不見有人，你才換回便服趕來  
 廣場。身後家人提醒你，記得待會  
 須上班執勤，你便從碑石轉身  
 樓窗外已是深宵，垂觀廣場上  
 獨剩那蟻，抬著小頭像追望你

like walking in a leaf, up through its veins towards the tip—  
 on the stelae no one looks sick, just bemused  
 that day you smiled and pressed the shutter. Click!  
 a cross on a small vase, accompanying the stele.  
 you say we should have picked a flower  
 when you notice an ant climbing out of the vase  
 towards another stele, the subject shifted to  
 what's outside the window, and looking down the hill,  
 a row of trees more or less separates the graveyard and the public  
 housing block,  
 its residents so tiny, marching with the ants.  
 the tablets are brand new, with only names  
 and dates of birth and death, and you find someone  
 born the same day as you, and can only stare into the blankness  
 traversed by that lone ant, how at the end of a flow of people  
 there is no one, as you change into civilian clothes and head back  
 to the square. Your family reminds you that  
 you're on duty later, and you turn away from the stelae  
 to see it's dark outside, then look down at the square  
 where there's one ant, holding up his head and gazing at you.

*Translated from the Chinese by Chris Song and Lucas Klein*

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