

Man-Sik LEE

More and More Alone

I am gazing at my daughter listening to the music,
Walt Disney's ambitious picture "Beauty and the Beast,"
dangling her legs in the air, wearing a headset,
already grown up, in 1992, like a big girl.

And then I am not happy about it at all.
A few days ago I was happy, but I am not happy now.

Daddy, do you know your rival?
Daddy, you do know him, don't you?
Yes, but as for me., it's all right.

I'm glad only a few days are left, because I'm alone.
You see, I hate no school, for I'm alone, I'm just alone.

Yes, alone, me too, more and more alone.
You have to live like that, at school or on holidays.
I could not find the words, however, for that only.

I am gazing at my daughter listening to the music,
Walt Disney's ambitious picture "Beauty and the Beast,"
dangling her legs in the air, wearing a headset,
already grown up, in 1992, like a big girl.

Note: my daughter was born in 1986.

The Child Is Cruel

The child is cruel,
he kills a spider out of boredom,
he throws a stone at a frog,
he leaves a dying father.
No, life is cruel.
Do not croak for help like a frog.
You do not eat the meat of a poor cow,
What of the cry of the weeds or grains plucked out,
What of that scream.
The child is cruel,
he kills a spider to kill time.
Kill just enough to eat,
Rescue what's left over,
but live a life in the kitchen refuse.
The child is cruel, no
I am cruel,
the child does not know it.

The History of War

I throw it first,
you throw it a little later,
you throw it as hard as you can.
David the boy throws a stone first,
Goliath the giant is hit on the head.
He falls down slowly,
he had a reason for standing here,
so he has a reason for falling.

You step backward a little more,
yes, let us start right there,
you hold your sword this high,
you hold your sharp lance straight.
I rush forward first,
you rush out a little later.
The lance strikes the shield,
Sometimes the lance pierces the flesh,
or hits the sword.
He screams sharply,
he falls down slowly,
he had a reason for riding away on the horse,
so he has a reason for falling.

You do not lift your head,
It is flying just above your head,

you are firmly determined.
You aim and shoot first,
I rush out a little later.
Sometimes, you will be hit first,
a little later I will have a hole.
The passing sound is heard in the hole of head,
the painful cry is heard in the holes of arms or legs.
He screams sharply,
he rolls to the right slowly,
he had a reason for crawling on his belly,
thus he has a reason for falling.

The Power of the Spirit

Not the sword
but the spirit kills the man.

The spirit of April 19th, 1960
ousted the president of the Republic of Korea,
killed many students some months before,
established a history, that of the Revolution of April 19th.

And the spirit of May 16th, 1961
selected a major general as the president of the Republic of Korea,
had made only military generals presidents of Korea for 30 years,
established a history, that of the Revolution of May 16th,
or that of the Military Revolution of May 16th in view of another spirit,
or that of the Coup d'etat of May 16th in view of yet another spirit.

Thus the power of the spirit of May 16th
destroyed the power of the spirit of April 19th,
so I lamented it as a failed revolution
during my four years of university days.

Then, due to the power of another spirit, of which I am not sure,
the cemetery park of April 19th is being reconstructed into
sacred grounds as the cemetery park of Admiral Chungmoogong,
I enjoy seeing it of late halfway up Mount Bukhan.

The spirit may kill a man, and
the spirit can resurrect a dead man.

Notes:

Admiral Chungmoogong is an Admiral Nelson to the Korean people.

Mount Bukhan is the mountain bordering almost the entire northern part of Seoul.

The southern part of Seoul has been developed into city from open fields since 1960s

Than My Smiling Wife

My daughter, sleeping ,is prettier.
Her round face is pretty,
frowning as if dreaming,
frowning but not naughty,
prettier than my wife's smiling face.

Jiyoung Is Ill Again

Jiyoung is ill again.
She had a car accident on her way to school last spring.
She was critically wounded, so I couldn't contact her.
I'm glad to see you back in the class, I couldn't contact you.
Yes, sir, it was near deadly, school was nobody's worry.
I'm glad to see her enjoy life in school.
I plan to go abroad and study English this coming summer.
Jiyoung, such a girl, is ill again.
She did not show up at the final exam.
I should not have told her to study so hard.
Why is she not here, Kang Jiyoung, she's a good student.
Jiyoung is ill again, she so wanted to come, but couldn't.
I have told her to live a hard life, for nothing.
Enjoy, study just a little bit.
It is not that important to live a good life.
It is quite alright to enjoy life while alive.
Jiyoung is ill again.

The Greek tyrant Mezentius "would even couple carcasses/ with living bodies as a form of torture./ hand to hand and face to face, he made them/ suffer corruption oozing gore and slime./ In that wretched embrace, and a slow death." This is Virgil's explanation.

The torture of Mezentius is the mother of poetry.

Without alcohol, I cannot sleep at night. I cannot close my eyes. I read books all night long, for I cannot close my eyes. I close my eyes, and I encounter the torture of Mezentius. I close my eyes, I kiss my death. My hands are cupped in the hands of death, my face is crimped to the face of death. I close my eyes, I close my eyes to sleep, and the death begins asking questions, it stinks, it is oozing gore and slime. I cannot draw a line clearly between the dead and the living. Dirty sticky matter is oozing out muddily. I am slowly dying.

I begin to think of the poetry, for it is a form of hanging tough under the torture of Mezentius.

Note: Virgil, *The Aeneid*,. Transl.. Robert Fitzgerald, New York: Random House, 1983. 247.

It Is Difficult for Me to Meet My Middle-aged Wife.

It is difficult for me to meet my middle-aged wife.

I want to go into the house
tired of the fierce competition outside.
My wife wants to go out of the house
bored by the tiring daily life inside.

Now and then we meet in front of the door.

It was a hard day really,
I'd like to stretch my legs and take a rest.
It was a long day really,
I lost my appetite and feel languid.

Sometimes, we meet behind the door
with the moaning of sex,
with the writhing of sex,
no more children to make,
no more future to yield..

God's Baseball Game Ticket.

I realized that there was no reason for God to buy a ball game ticket with his own money. I realized this while watching a ball game on TV with my son on a late Sunday afternoon, after a nap. Now the score was 3 to 0. A home run would turn the tide of the game. While watching the ball game for these edgy moments, I realized that God knows the final score. He might watch the game on a TV. But he wouldn't buy a ticket with his own money. To suffer the still-cold weather, to suffer the long trip to the stadium, to suffer a hard bench--to suffer all these, he wouldn't buy a ticket with his own money, if he knew the final result. Therefore, how fortunate I was not to be God.

Then I realized that God might buy a ticket with his own money. After I finished watching the game on TV with my son, all the family members went to Mt. Bukhan. It was a little late, so we wouldn't go far. However, it was pleasant to go up the mountain and it was good for the health, so up we went to Mt. Bukhan. To suffer a still-cold windy weather, to suffer a long trip to Mt. Bukhan, to suffer a still-hard soil and an uncomfortable knapsack--and to suffer all these, I bought a ticket for Mt. Bukhan. While coming down the mountain I met the flower buds, the buds about to become the azaleas, the buds about to become the forsythia. They were showing their colors a little. Even though I knew the final result, no, because I knew the final result, I was much happier.

Excrement Problems

Our family members are discussing excrement problems peacefully.

My wife's excrement is as follows

(She is laughing and refuses to draw it; my drawing):



She is the only member
to live a normal life,
getting up early and sleeping at night.

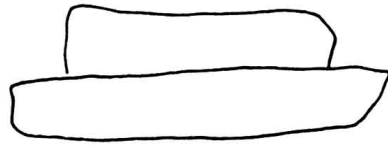
Thus, her excrement is normal.

Its shape is also normal.

My son's excrement is as follows (my drawing).



my son is strong, his legs are bigger than mine, and healthy brown. He plays defense on his class soccer team, though. His family members love his healthy excrement, his thick and strong excrement.
My daughter's excrement is as follows (my drawing).



My daughter has a stomach-ache now; she is irritated, and anxious about cramming for final exams. I understand too well my daughter's excrement problem, because I am the origin of all the excrement problems. My excrement is like the goat's or diarrhea (my drawing).



Life too tense,
life too exhausting.
I wish my daughter would live a serious life.
However, I do not wish she would have excrement problems like mine.

The power of sorrow

Sorrow stood there in human form

holding her time-worn handbag to her side,
wearing her tall black boots,
draping her curled hair low on the nape of her neck,

a simple girl with a common face
standing absent-mindedly in front of

me sitting in the backseat of a crowded
city bus. I stubbornly watched the
sorrow in her.

It didn't mean she was crying,
nor that her face betrayed she had a serious problem,
nor that she looked so tired, not at all.

I found the power of sorrow in a simple girl
in nicely fitted clothes, well-matched to the early winter weather,
showing a little fatigue, appropriate to the time of the evening,
blended inside a bus trafficking some unknown city parts.

Sorrow was slowly raising her hands,
taking a man to her bosom warmly,
unsheathing and giving her breast to her baby.

The history of Xanthippe: On Poetry (8)

Sometimes my wife looks over my shoulder and keeps looking sideways, thinking it must be a piece of writing, it may be left in the world for a very long time by mistake; most of the time our relationship has not been so bad, if I carefully look back, however, I can remember the silent

but exciting moments of killing him in my fantasy, just as the wicked wife of Socrates, Xanthippe, is notorious for; so if mistakenly, erroneously, those scraggly scribblings were to be left in the world long after our death-- because I don't think he is an absolutely dependable person-- unbeknownst to me or to my knowledge, he may put down some bad things about me, I'm a little worried,:

"Honey, don't put me down as Xanthippe. I often cooked or mopped up for you." Long after we have left the world, when someone bored to death on a Sunday arranges some of my poems scribbled on paper, irritated with me, a useless sort, and with my man references to my wife and her trivial stories, and comes across some wonderful phrases or believable anecdotes helpful in his mind to his writing, and if his humor dictates, then it doesn't matter whether he is a good writer or not, if "the phrase 'wicked wife'" is achieved by a fortunate or an unfortunate accident, what can we do, since nobody is

concerned for us and nothing is left to defend us, eternally, until the paper is worn out, you will be left only as Xanthippe.

