

CHEN Ko Hua
Poems

MY POSTURE OF SLEEP
—A SALUTE TO EMILY DICKINSON AND A REPLY TO “I DIED FOR BEAUTY”

Lying in the narrow bed-like coffin,
I adjust my uneasy postures many times.
An expanding emptiness is there to
Compete with me in looting the limited expanse:

“Yet your bosom is still so spacious...”
My posture always looks
Afraid of cold, expecting love—

On the day of disaster, when my corpse is bared in the wild
And big birds come to peck my blood-shot eyes,
I’ll be in the posture that seems to embrace
And to be embraced...

In the wind, by death’s demanding hand,
I am turned over to the front

And turned over again to the back....

**

WHERE THE DAWNING SKY TURNED ITS SAPPHIRE INTO WHITE

Where the dawning sky turned its sapphire into white,
 I saw the face of the sea into which floating ice was melting.
 For an instant when the summer day was touched by autumn's flavor,
 I saw vividly, at the moment twilight dipped into the black night,
 The color of your eyes, turned from the brilliant to the quiet.
 I walked toward where the distant mount turned its indigo into lake-green.
 Cobblestones broke into delicate pebbles, then shattered further into sand.
 When the last trembling note of a song disappeared into the silent present,
 At the other end, where the wind started to whirl, I wrote you a letter,
 While the sea tide was ebbing away and the next not yet flooding in,
 While the last desire faded and the next was not yet born.

**

A HEAVY RAIN HAS JUST FALLEN

Suddenly, all stars of the universe appear bright;
 Not a single one missing, all are orderly lined up in the night sky;
 One by one they enter my eyes.

I am agitated, almost to tears,
 Convinced that only when the whole world
 And I...die at the same...time
 Could this happen

But in fact it does, simply because
 A heavy rain has just fallen...

A heavy rain has just fallen...

**

JULY

As if a huge UFO has just soared and left,
 And we have settled down in the spot the engine first landed
 And in the heat it left behind,
 Look around, within the hundreds, thousands, and millions of miles....
 Wherever humans are scattered, nothing left but parched land
 And blackened seeds of bad-tempered dandelions:
 "Forever July...July's floating fires..." Who was it
 That in our private place of dense hair
 Printed a passionate barley crop.
 We now thirst for clouds
 But the rare clouds in the sky are UFOs in disguise.
 In fact, we are drying up step by step,
 Though dreaming at night of the big rain beating out faces and the vast prairie;
 Yet in fact, we are drying up step by step,
 Drying up step by step;

Are drying up step by step to become
 In the post-UFO epoch
 A shred of dried specimen.

**

AN ANSWER
 — WRITTEN TO KU-CHENG

Do you feel pain? How much? Can you endure — this pain?
 How I've searched everywhere and found no wound.
 I trod wildly the small garden of herbs
 And plucked the first iris and narcissus flowering in the starry night.
 The night before your journey, after the swarming panic crows were exhausted,
 You're just quietly checking the serenity and storms saved in your baggage.
 Your eyes avoided tears; your will defeated time:
 "First let me seek a prairie where winter will not attack,
 To house you and the lambs of poetry you raise...."
 As to the lust that will never heal,
 Who is supposed to find an excuse and end "him"?
 To end the fancy and waiting of a lonely soul —
 After all you didn't remind me.
 This gloomy huge world had forgotten his promise to a firefly

That anyone who desired to sleep would have a bed and a dream's embrace,
Who was to move ahead a torch, who fell down a kiss,
Who hoped to fly a pair of wings and a place remote,
And who was suffering... an answer.

Translated from the Chinese by the author

*

我的睡姿
一向艾蜜、狄金遜致敬兼答
“我為美而殉”

躺在如窄床的棺廓裏
我調整我艱難的睡姿多次
有一種膨脹的空虛
和我搶奪有限的伸展

「然而你的胸還多麼空敞...」
我的姿勢看來總
畏懼著寒冷，企求著愛—

來日大難，屍曝荒野
大鳥前來啄食我充血的眼球
我像在擁抱
又像被擁抱的姿勢...

在風中被死亡挑剔的手
翻過正面，

又翻回反面...

在黎明天空由藍轉白的地方

在黎明天空由藍轉白的地方

我看見浮冰正溶化成水的海面

有那麼夏日確切泛起秋意的一刻

我清楚望見你在黃昏完全沒入夜黑的那一瞬

眼神由輝煌轉為靜謐的顏色

我步行向遠山由靛藍轉為湖練的地方

鵝卵石正分散為更細緻的礫石再碎裂成沙

在一首歌最後顫音消失為靜寂的當下

我確實在風開始流動的那端寫了一封給你的信
趁這一波海潮退去而下一波海潮尚未擁來
趁上一個起念消失而下一次起念還未到來

**

一陣大雨剛剛下過

突然，全宇宙的星星全都清楚出現了一顆也不遺漏地排列在夜空之中
一一映入我眼簾

我激動欲淚；
以為這是全世界
和我同時死去時
才會發生的事

但其實只是因為
一陣大雨剛剛下過

一陣大雨剛剛下過。。。。。

**

七月

彷彿一艘巨大的幽浮才剛凌空離去
我們定居在那原來引擎棲息
所留下的躁熱裏
舉目方圓百里 千里 萬里.....
人類分布之處只剩焦土
和暴躁的蒲公英灼黑的種籽：
「永遠的七月...，七月流火...」是誰
在我們的體毛濃密處
留下一朵朵深情的麥田圈
我們渴望著雲朵
但整幅天空稀有的雲朵盡是幽浮所偽裝
其實我們正逐漸乾燥
做著大雨痛擊臉頰和廣大草原之夜夢

但其實我們正逐漸乾燥
逐漸乾燥

正逐漸乾燥成這
後幽浮時代
一幅乾燥
的標本。

**

回答
—寫給顧城

你痛了麼 有多痛呢 還忍得住麼 這痛
我遍尋不著傷口呵
我踩亂了小小的藥園
採來了星夜初發的杜若和石竹
在遠行前的晚天，當悽惶奔走的鴉都倦了
你只是靜靜點數行囊收存的寧靜和風暴
眸子迴避著眼淚，意志逼退了時光：
『讓我先尋得一處冬天永遠無法襲擊的草原，安置你，
以及你豢養的詩的小羊...』
而那永不能痊癒的想望
該由誰來尋得一個藉口結束他呢
結束起一個靈魂枯寂的想像和等待—
你終究沒有提醒
陰霾廣大的世界忘了曾經答應過一隻螢火蟲
讓渴睡的都得到一張眠床和夢的懷抱
讓前行的一支火把，跌倒的一個吻
讓想飛的擁有翅膀和遠方
讓受著痛的，一個回答。
