

Min Htet Maung

He was called Reverse

1.

Reverse thought, talked and did reversely.
Reverse, my childhood friend, was so nice
but too argumentative.
Reverse was a stick-in-the-mud
who was forced to leave home by his dad so many times.

2.

Reverse never finished high school, never
did work, never made a living.
His mother once urged Reverse to go to sea.
Reverse once went to the country and
stayed in monk hood for three years.

3.

One day, Reverse took the wrong way and
reached my house by mistake.
Reverse, wearing his T-shirt and hat backward,
said he was going to do some business.

4.

I knew Reverse well.
Those days, he hung around with Up-Side-
Down, playing guitar and doping together.
Due to a fight at a restaurant,
Reverse was arrested and put in jail.

5.

Reverse spread down his long hair like a woman.
He wore jeans and studied spoken English.
He said he studied it coz he hated British colonialism.

6.

Whatever Reverse did never impressed people.
And Reverse never got impressed with things that impressed people.
Reverse embraced reverse way of thinking.

7.

Reverse's parents legally claimed in a paper
that Reverse was no longer their son and heir.
I heard Reverse got married with an ex-wife of a sailor.

Then I heard again Reverse divorced her.

8.

I met Reverse at a downtown teashop.
He said he didn't want to be successful.
He was selling betel in a new town.

9.

It was at a beer-station when I met Reverse again.
Reverse was then the front man of the station's band.
Reverse's parents died and left him a fortune.

10.

Reverse came to me driving his Prado.
He was wearing shorts and a short hair-cut.
A cell phone in his hand, too.
Reverse borrowed books in English from me.

11.

Reverse became a literary critic called "Mr.Reverse"
and wrote for magazines.
Reverse did Abstract Art paintings
and threw an art exhibit.
Reverse occasionally appeared at
diplomatic parties.

12.

No one knew what Reverse was doing.
It was said Reverse rented a room at a
grand hotel and settled there.
Reverse was seen hanging around with a blonde model.

13.

Reverse never came to me again.
Reverse's novels became bestsellers in the
domestic market.
Reverse even released an album.
He wrote and sang all songs for it.

14.

Reverse directed and produced a film.
In Reverse's film, Reverse was the only character.
In Reverse's film, there was no dialogue, either.

15.

Reverse was now a well-know and respected man.
But amid fame, Reverse disappeared out of the blue.

Rumors said Reverse set up an apparel business in France.

16.

Reverse wrote a book in English and published it
In international market.

Reverse named his book “The Art of Reverse Living”.

I heard his book sold well competing Harry Potter books in market.

17.

Reverse contacted me via email.

In one of his email letters, he claimed,
“the world is spinning reversely, buddy”

And he asked me if I was still taking truth to be truth.

18.

Reverse founded Reverse Foundation all over the world.

Reverse Institute produced scholars who never graduated.

The International Reverse Awards granted by

Reverse Lovers Society was prestigious like Nobel Prizes.

19.

CNN’s Larry King interviewed Reverse.

Larry asked, “What is it that you want to do most now.”

And Reverse replied, “ I want to do nothing more.

What I want to do now is die.”

20.

Reverse thought, talked and did reversely.

Reverse, my childhood friend, was so nice
but too argumentative.

Reverse was a stick-in-the-mud

who was forced to leave home by his dad so many times.

*

Yellow

In the street,
the crowd was in a mess.

Through the crowd,
she walked along.

She was dressed up
in peaceful blue.

White flowers
on the blue background.

And at the centre of each flower,
there were bright yellow stigmas.

*

Mahlar

Mahlar,
You are a beautiful sweet flower
and you are a delicious roasted fish.

Mahlar,
You are an educated beaut
and you are a little-known massage room.

Mahlar,
You are a building with a history
and you are a beastly cyclone.

*

Thirimingalar

There,
There are porters bearing life
on their shoulders.
There are betters betting their lives.
And there are cabbages and lemons.
And there are puzzles and quizzes
coming in a rush in highway trucks.
And whisky, blondes, flirting
And the grinning poet
who came to enjoy the show.
There is everything there,
but you don't need to know everything.

“The market that doesn’t sleep at night.”
It doesn’t sleep at night and in the daytime either.
Taking anti-sleep pills,
It is getting bigger everyday.
This is also Yangon in Yangon.
Will there be more fights
after these fights end?
How much is a pound of fights?
Did the price of fights go up this morning?
“Hey, man! aren’t you leaving yet?”
In a mass of funny questions and crows’ calls,
The trucks arrive like the jumbo jets
from every direction. So gracious!
Oh, it’s already 7 o’clock.

*

A Black Crow and A White Crow

I saw a white crow.
Not only its feathers,
but its beak, eyes, legs and
the whole body were snow white.
Its conscience must be white too.

I was much surprised to see the bird.
It was all-beautiful and unique.
When I saw it,
it was soaring in the vast sky
in a sunny day.
What I saw obsessed me
like an all-great and grand water-color painting.

Was that bird a white crow in reality?
Could that be another kind of bird?
No. I’m sure, dead sure. It was a white crow.
Coz I am a black crow.

*

LP and his surroundings

Bored,
LP improvised a song and sang it.
The song transformed to a rap
and crawled into the speaker of a teashop.
When someone switched on a blue button by mistake,
Out of the speaker busted the roses
like the bullets.

* * *

LP smoked cigarettes in secret.
He didn't want his pop to know it.
LP's Platinum necklace was not
what his pop bought him.
It was a loving present form.
LP's girl, Kit Kit.
His pop didn't warn against LP's love affair.
But his pop didn't like Kit Kit .
He said Kit Kit was too sophisticated.
LP and Kit Kit polished the present age
behind the backs of their parents.

* * *

LP was not naive
and not the kind who didn't have hopes.
LP hoped to get rid of the language signs out of his head.
He hoped to warn people
against the trickery of language,
and hoped to change the thinking
with new species of language.
LP didn't forsake the society.
He was the one who wanted to save it.
LP's policy was that there was no policy.
LP picked the stars from the sky
and scattered them all on the ground
just to let the children play with them.

*

The Evening News

The sharpest sword.
The sweetest apple.
The most beautiful poem.

*

They
sunk
in
the
ocean
disappeared
So many centuries has passed
and they still can be found.

*

What are popular today are:
nuclear,
G.M. food,
cyber poetry
and et cetera.

*

On My Birthday

On my birthday, it was drizzling.
On my birthday, my daughters were doing their exam.
On my birthday, my wife was busy.

On my birthday, I didn't feel very well.
On my birthday, what should I have done?
On my birthday, I remembered my mom.

On my birthday, should I have done something good?
On my birthday, I wanted to write a memorable poem.
On my birthday, I'd better forget my birthday.

*

The Matter of Another World

Mustn't I create?
Mustn't I write?
The dream is packed with
things yet to be expressed.
Shadows chasing shadows.
Shadows becomes older,
Alluring shadows.

As the quiet music is dancing
Naturally in the dark,
Symbols, perception and clichés,
On the bridge of roses,
Trains run past one after another.

On to a vertical flat surface,
He came.
But it's not sure if the whistling
is his.
Leave the window alone!
Under the blue sky,
The sea seems to be getting wider.

*

A Relational Song

About the world oil crisis —
When it comes floating in misery

with the burnt smell in the air
You can talk — who will win the game?

Italy or France or whatever
Tomorrow the milkman

will come on time — Are you
watching the poetry move?

Though Zaraqawi is dead — God will
send us another Zaraqawi

Don't worry, Superman is back!
Clouds change their colors

Not to fall down at the next corner
Hold tight — as it's so fast

We have to shoot the forms of the bottles
with new technique and new sensibility

It's not unusual that it doesn't rain
It you're not at least 21, you can't

be a candidate for the place of governor
Don't get it wrong — skip this page fast

Though you should sleep soundly
It is to save the penguins

in Arctic — What does it mean
That Chinese art becomes popular in the world?

HIV has lived up to 25 now
If you don't need it, it is rubbish

Until the black files in the computer hasn't been
deleted — he will keep testing his missile

Won't he? Now in this quiet night
You can hear a lizard chirrup

It's you who wants to bestsell
It's also you who asks for new art

It's you again who gives us the hotlines,
aren't you? my drunk smart-ass bro!

*

Greed / Need

I need a new form
to store my ideas and new thoughts,

As you need a pair of good new shoes
to hike in the forest and to climb up the mountains.

*

The Conversation of Three

Me-One : I don't like coffee.
Just tea.
Me-Two : I don't like tea,
but coffee.
Me-Three: I like both tea and coffee.
So, I have both.

* * *

Me-One : I don't like tea now.
So, I am trying coffee.
Me-Two : I don't like coffee any longer.
So, now I drink tea.
Me-Three : Yeah, as for me,
I don't drink both
as I don't like them any more.

* * *

Me-One : Hey, now I begin to like
both coffee and tea.
Me-Two : Me too.
Me-Three : Ah, I think I must drink something.
What should I have,
coffee or tea?

*

**As the Poem Was a bit Short,
I Made the little Long.
Don't Care if You Like It or Not.**

You
And I
Are going
Somewhere.
But Where?

*

I Come to You - Mekong

Mekong – I am a poet
I come to you – for
I appreciate your natural beauty
I investigate your inside story
And I am close with you
Mekong – You like a human being
You have a head, body, arms, and legs
Your height is 4,800 kilometers long
65 million blood cells flow up and
down in your body
Mekong – You put your head above the
China pillow
While you lay down on the ground
So your long hair is enfolding
The dry tea-leaf smells from Yunnan
Mekong – you rest your shoulders
on the mountains of Burma
that is comfortable for you
Mekong – your breasts look like
sticky-rice fields in Laos,
they are ripe, colored yellow-ochre
Mekong – your belly is like a Thai girl's belly
That is not covered between blouse and Jean
But you decorate it with colorful orchids
Mekong – your hips look like sculpted sandstones
from Angkor in Cambodia,
big, firm, wonderful and gracefully artistic
Mekong – you place your slim legs
among the green paddies of the delta in Vietnam
with best-looking style
Mekong – you look like a human being
You have mind, heart and brain
So you feel, you create and you think
Mekong – you ferment much work.
Through three thousand years of civilization in your life
Mekong – you have create history
You give a legacy of ancient culture
You nurtured religion customs
And you spawned legend and
traditions for folk-music, song
these are your milestones and diaries
from the flowing of your life
Mekong – you I listened to your timeless
legends and stories
Especially, Naga and Praa Kaar

Naga arose from your body
Also human became Dolphin to float
Through your body
These are real or not?
These are only legends?
People talk, like and believe these
stories even now
I heard, I saw – these are
very interesting, mysterious,
supernatural things for me
Mekong – I glimpsed your soul in your blood
The ancient temples – Bagan, Vat Phou, Angkor
Where fading Hindu gave way to Buddhism
And tongues you scattered from southern India
Languages for your people to speak and sing and chant
Mekong – traditional music and folk songs
are active in your heart
I appreciated your nice arts
I feel soft and fresh in my mind
Also I am happy in your festive nights
Mekong – I see people’s daily lives are very simple
In your heart, they live and depend on you
They are fisherman, farmers and ordinary people
Like your children, they call “Mother of Waters” so lovely
Yes – really, truly, you are the very kindest mother of nature
Mekong – you compose your natural beauty
with mountains, forests, fields,
streams, rapids, falls and people’s life
in your body
Your body your beauty is without modernity you compose only
Now, I know –
The simple is the most wonderful and the most beautiful
Mekong – you heart and body are so beautiful
But, I see some wounds on your body
Blood is blocked in your veins
Who makes these wounds?
Who blocks these veins?
I know-somebody wants to infect you
with modern techniques
So that you will become more developed
Oh, simple Mekong – don’t you believe them
They will make new clothes for your body
After that they will send you to the market
They will drink your blood for their benefits
They will destroy the beauty of your virgin nature
There is injustice – There is torture
There is terrorism

Mekong – I talk to you
Don't believe them
Don't try to be a modern beauty if you do
You will damage your natural beauty
You will dry out your body
You will lose your life
If you die,
All of your history, culture and your children will die
Mekong – I don't want to see your funeral
I want to see you healthy, natural beautiful forever
So I will save you I will save you
I will protect you and I will attack for you
Mekong – I come to you
I am a poet
the poet is the one who loves Nature
more than others.

Traslated from the Burmese by Maung Day
