

Tammy Ho Lai-ming

**WHY SHE LOST HER BOYFRIEND  
AT AGE TWENTY FIVE**

Mysteries she couldn't stand. That woman  
used to be his subordinate co-worker  
but not anymore. Why then was she still

writing him bland e-mails and closing them,  
one after another, with 'Love'? And who  
was this friend of his? She toured Thai

beaches every other month and came back  
with such boasting tales like ornaments  
on a tall hat. Distances she couldn't

stand. The space between one phone call and  
the next must not exceed sixty minutes. Intimacy,  
if too little, she couldn't stand.

She needed to feel his gently snoring throat  
or bulging chest when they slept on the same  
bed. He preferred being galaxies away.

## WEAK HE

He wanted a pair of strong arms.  
Any time I came close to him,  
he claimed, he would hold me  
tight, but not suffocatingly so,  
and that would make him feel strong.

My fragile man, my Sam.  
I let him hold my hand and bag  
instead of body. I mistook pity  
as passion. That conquering strength  
he looked for with a pair of burning  
eyes as well as arms.  
He refused to hold my bag.

He said only womanisers hold  
women's bags.

If he were strong, would he only  
have me in his arms, hoping that  
it's enough. When my coffee went cold  
he drank it. Creamless, sugarless,  
bitter taste left on the tip  
of his tongue but he did not complain.

He would keep his weakness. Mental  
and physical. I let him live  
like a coward, as if I don't care.  
But if I don't, who does?

## ONE IN A DECADE

Let me write a poem, line on line!  
Calligraphy along your spine....  
Future is uncertain, present is fun;  
Compose a poem for my lovely one.

My pen is a wet tongue on the page,  
A passionate actor on a stage;  
Words on paper mark my muse,  
Flow in metre, light my fuse.

Pen's gunpowder, you're the spark.  
Words exploding from the dark--  
A poem that rhymes, mimes our love  
Fourteen lines is quite enough--

This is the poem, never fail or fade.  
This is the poem, one in a decade!

*Tammy Ho Lai-ming is the editor of HKU WRITING: AN ANTHOLOGY (March, 2006). My own works have been anthologized in Hong Kong and Britain. Other poems, book reviews, short stories, dialogues and images appear or are forthcoming in Hong Kong, Taiwan, the Philippines, New Zealand, Thailand, India, Macao, Australia, USA, and Great Britain.*