

Changming Yuan

Cityscape: A Parallel Poem

Rusty teeth in the mouth of the city  
Morning glows in the tongue of the day  
*Bite off all the darkness, they whispered;*  
*And chew the season well.*

## Strawberry: Another Parallel Poem

Bolder than blood  
Fleshier than a whole collection  
Of summer spots

You wear your heart inside out  
With sun-stained seeds

We wrap your body greedily  
With our tongues and minds

## Natural Confrontations

### *1/ Orchid*

Deep in the valley  
Alone on a shady spot  
You bloom aloud, though  
There are neither eyes  
Nor ears open nearby  
Paying the slightest attention  
To your shape or melody  
Be it ever so fragrant  
So fulfilling

### *2/ Ant*

Stretching its hair-like limbs  
As far as it can  
The ant embracing  
The tallest Douglas tree  
In the forest  
Attempts to shake off  
All its leaves  
Branches, and even  
To uproot it

### *3/ Feather*

A white fluffy plume  
From an unknown bird  
Happening to fly by  
Drifts around, falling down  
Slowly as if to wipe out  
All the dust at dusk  
With its invisible fingers

## Seasonal Stanzas

### *October*

Burning, blooming  
Like spring flowers  
All tree leaves  
Giggle, guffawing  
With the west wind  
In their fierce defiance  
Against the elegy of the land  
Recited aloud  
In blood-throated voices

### *November*

Most monotonous month:  
Each passing day is depressed  
Into a crow, its wings  
Its body and tails  
Newly glazed in the mists  
Of thick dusk  
Though its heart still  
Lingers in the memory of  
Summer's orange morning glows

### *December*

As the sun sinks deeper every day  
Into the other side of the world  
The shadow is getting longer, darker  
Making our lives slant more and more  
Towards night, when nature  
Tries to balance yin and yang  
By covering each dark corner  
With white snowflakes  
Ever so softly, quietly

As each twig frowns hard at twilight  
Why not give it smile and book a space in heaven?

## Egg\* Poems: An English Languacultural History of China

### 1/ *Ancient China*

They used to drink *tea*  
Wear *silk*  
Eat from *china*  
Think in terms of *zen*  
And practice *Confucianism*

Only - is it true?

### 2/ *Semi-Colonial China*

Wearing *cheongsam*  
These poor *coolies* arrived here  
On *sampans*  
Always ready to *kowtow*  
To a *tycoon*  
Who lived in *Shangri-La*  
Eating *dim sum*  
Drinking *oolong*  
Playing *mahjong*  
Gambling in a *casino* every day  
Though reluctant to give *cumshaw*

3/ Mandarin China

Led by *dao*  
A *yin*  
Running *dog*  
Wearing *qipao*  
Is fighting against a *yang*  
*Paper tiger*  
With *wushu*  
After getting *brainwashed*  
Through *maotai*  
Like a *taikongnaut*  
At a *fengshui* spot  
Dominated by *qi*

\*A word (or person) with a Chinese origin living in the West is often called an 'egg,' which is white-skinned, but yellow-hearted.