

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.