

Ashley Hamilton

From: Taiwan in Ten Lines

16. 五 花 Intersections

Hot spring upon us, everywhere I see
drooping cream magnolias dangling
from the swollen fingers of men and
women at fussy intersections. Doting
with a hungry seagull's patience, hawkers
in large straw hats under cow-heavy rain
clouds. With silent bells draped and
swinging, they waft nuptial fragrance
to rounds of strangers in hopes their
slow toil might payoff by sundown.

20. Beethoven's Garbage

Classical tunes ripple down
streets the melody circus
bent. Some dredged down
sibyl, aged sappy charisma, yes
a drunk wallowing accordion to
stake out the faces it glides past.
Innocent, it's wake in truth a
caroling alarm - it's lyrics go
put all your garbage here while
you've got the chance. Not in America.

22. Hiding on America's Independence Day

Twenty minutes into my final morning
class a frantic canary voice through cracked
door orders I go upstairs this instant. With haste
I ascend passing rooms full of quiet academic
soldiers, still knolls, while others host galloping
smiles and ricochet the sounds of innocent
tomfoolery. Stowed away on the fifth floor, I wait hunched
over, beading sweat from the humidity. Subdued, I listen for the canary
to call "safe". A clandestine American in your territory;
recipient of your earnings and your little one's Sunday illustrations.

24. 龍洞 海洋公

Steady train pulling us along hot greased
tracks before noon, stacked knees laid up
against the black rubber sill, on my islet of
dark thoughts, these stag hangovers start
most Sundays. At harbor, we move slow in the
dense coastal air, become merpeople and make
to the barnacle crusted rocks, exposed grave
sites. Dropping into Poseidon's cobalt realm, we
laze with bright interest at the reams of sea
creatures; beacons losing time in the busy dimensions.

26. On the MRT in Taipei

Heaping throngs of goers chock
feather tight into this manmade
fortune, slinking forward and back
ad nauseam for it's lively commune,
torsos slant and lock on this public
cavalcade. Three senior women whose
blended aroma I catch, gruff madly absorbed
in exchange. From behind their pulpy teeth
fiery Mandarin darts, shingling my nosy
forearm with staccato breaths

32. Drinking the Snake's Body

Three shots just 1 hundred N T dollars, the blood bile and venom, a handsome trifecta. The blood, lackluster watermelon, dull sweet-tart hinging gasoline on the palette; dregs like micro red sand, and now were Swammerdam amateurs reaching for the next..

Bile, transparent kiwi hue down the hatch, similar in sweetness to the blood though a lingering cholic acid, mouth now dark bitter curtains, compliments of some anonymous gallbladder. Venom, filmy cement, taste buds waving the white flag two shots ago, catatonic.