

Y

By Yuan Changming

with your yellowish skin
you enjoy meditating within the shape of
a wishbone, inside the broken wing
of an oriental bird strayed, or
in a larger sense, you look like
the surfacing tail of a pacific whale
who yells low, but whose voice reaches afar
far beyond a whole continent, to a remote village
near the yellow river, where you used to sunbathe
rice stems, reed leaves, cotton skeletons
with a fork made of a single horn-shaped twig
when you were a barefooted country boy
on the other side of this new world

is this why you are so obsessed
with the horn-like letter?

Between Dawn and Night

By Yuan Changming

Golden teeth glistening
In the mouth of the city
Silver clouds colliding
At the tongue tip of day

*Bite off all darkness
They whisper
And chew the season well.*

Snowy Siamese Stanzas

By Yuan Changming

with
as little noise
as much leisure
as possible
you came
to perch
at this cold spot of time
like a pale word
fallen on the wasteland

merely
a voiceless being
never heard
yet ready to
herald
the glaring
thunder

of

summer

to melt
soft and quiet
before you
vanish
tracelessly
in the green
wind

time

Winter Vision

By Yuan Changming

Like billions of dark butterflies
Beating their wings
Against nightmares, rather
Like myriads of
Spirited coal-flakes
Spread from the sky
Of another world
A heavy black snow
Falls, falling, fallen
Down towards the horizon
Of my mind, where a little crow
White as a lost patch
Of autumn fog
Is trying to fly, flapping
From bough to bough

Natural Confrontations

By Yuan Changming

1/ Plum Blossom

Without a single leaf
Grass-dyed or sun-painted
To highlight it
But on a skeletal twig
Glazed with dark elegies
A bud is blooming, bold and blatant
Like a drop of blood
As if to show off, to challenge
The entire season
When whims and wishes
Are all frozen like the landscape

2/ Eddy

A gossamer-like breeze
Left far behind
By a running dog
Tries to strike
The stagnated twilight
Hanging above the whole city
Before the storm sets in

3/ Seagull

As if right from heaven
A snowy seagull charges down
Trying to pick up the entire ocean
With its bold beak
As the tsunami raises
All its fierce fists
In sweeping protection
Against earth's agitation
In foamy darkness

Seasonal Secrets

By Yuan Changming

- Summer: in her beehive-like room
so small that a yawning stretch
would readily awaken
the whole apartment building
she draws a picture on the wall
of a tremendous tree
that keeps growing
until it shoots up
from the cemented roof
- Autumn: not unlike a giddy goat
wandering among the ruins
of a long lost civilization
you keep searching
in the central park
a way out of the tall weeds
as nature makes new york
into a mummy blue
- Winter: after the storm
all dust hung up
in the crowded air
with his human face
frozen into a dot of dust
and a rising speckle of dust
melted into his face
to avoid this cold climate
of his antarctic dream
he relocated his naked soul
at the dawn of summer
- Spring: like a raindrop
on a small lotus leaf
unable to find the spot
to settle itself down
in an early autumn shower
my little canoe drifts around

Writing Raw

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near the horizon
beyond the bare bay

Destiny Redefined: A Wuxing Poem

Believe it or not, the ancient Chinese 5-Agent Principle accounts for us all.

By Yuan Changming

1/ Water (born in a year ending in 2 or 3)

-helps wood but hinders fire; helped by metal but hindered by earth
with her transparent tenderness
coded with colorless violence
she is always ready to support
or sink the powerful boat
sailing south

2/ Wood (born in a year ending 4 or 5)

-helps fire but hinders earth; helped by water but hindered by metal
rings in rings have been opened or broken
like echoes that roll from home to home
each containing fragments of green
trying to tell their tales
from the forest's depths

3/ Fire (born in a year ending 6 or 7)

-helps earth but hinders metal; helped by wood but hindered by water
your soft power bursting from your ribcage
as enthusiastic as a phoenix is supposed to be
when you fly your lipless kisses
you reach out your hearts
until they are all broken

4/ Earth (born in a year ending in 8 or 9)

-helps metal but hinders water; helped by fire but hindered by wood
i think not; therefore, I am not
what I am, but I have a color
the skin my heart wears inside out
tattooed intricately
with footprints of history

5/ Metal (born in a year ending in 0 or 1)

-helps water but hinders wood; helped by earth but hindered by fire
he used to be totally dull-colored
because he came from the earth's inside

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now he has become a super-conductor
for cold words, hot pictures and light itself
all being transmitted through his throat

Yuan Changming bio: Yuan Changming, an 8-time Pushcart nominee, grew up in rural China, started to learn English at 19 and published several monographs on translation before moving to Canada. Currently co-editing Poetry Pacific with Allen Qing Yuan in Vancouver, Yuan has poetry appearing in 1009 literary publications across 32 countries, including Best Canadian Poetry, BestNewPoemsOnline and Threepenny Review.