



Yuan Changming

Poetry 2016

Bamakoola

While all my fellow humans hope to
Enter heaven after they die, I am alone
Living in paradise already:

An earthly realm I have built myself
With the light from Lapland, where the setting sun
Shines with the morning glows above golden snow

The air from Shangri-la, where the yin
And yang are in pure and perfect balance with
Each other in every grass, every cloud

The water from Waterton Lakes, which
Reflect the mountain of trees as clearly
As the mountain reflects upon the clear water

That's all my spirit needs, not the fragments
Of the meaning about Eden long lost
But the whole backyard within my solitary heart

Skyline

Golden teeth glistening

In the mouth of the city

Silver clouds colliding

At the tongue tip of day

Bite off all darkness

They whispered

And chew the season well

NEKOPIRATI

Corn

A whole body of teeth

Nothing but teeth

To chew the passing summer

We bite off from you

All the pearl-like memories

Tinged with sunlight

A hard but juicy kiss

NEKOPIRATI

Poppies

Each pair of round lips

Cut right in the middle

Bleeding so boldly

In a foggy field

Nobody to kiss

Nobody to talk with

All like blood-skirted pasts

Painted thickly close to the heart

NEKOPIRATI

Winterscape: Crow vs Snow

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

NEKOPIRATI

My Crow

As an ancient Chinese saying goes
Crows everywhere are equally black
But this one in the backyard of my heart
Is as white as a summer cloud
I have fed him with fog and frost
Until his feathers, his flesh
His calls and even his spirit
All turned into white like winter washed

My crow's wings will never melt
Even when flying close to the sun

NEKOPIRATI

Chinese Gentility: the Origin of Haiku

Orchid: Deep in the valley
 Alone on an obscure spot
 You bloom none the less

Lotus: From foul decayed silt
 You shoot clean against the sun
 Never pollutable

Mum: Hanging on and on
 Even when wishes wither
 You keep flowering

Plum: Your brave bold blood dropped
 As though to melt all world's snow
 Before spring gathers

Natural Confrontations

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

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

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

NEKOPIRATI

Awaiting

There is a long wait of the passengers

For the detouring and delayed bus

And the wait of the wintry grasses

The wait of the legendary lion king

Before it preys upon a real baby zebra

And the wait of the summer sun deep in the nightmare

The wait of the orchid on the window ledge

The wait of the diamond in an unknown mine

And the wait where you stop and watch

And there is a wait of this darkness

Which you are going to compress into words

A wait that is to spread out thin on the blank paper

Unlike winter stars holding their light in light-years

The wait after you finish writing

And the longer wait then



Forecasting: a Wuxing Poem

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

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

now he has become a super-conductor

for cold words, hot pictures and light itself

all being transmitted through his throat

Immigration

To escape from the tyrannical logic

Of your mother tongue

You wandered, wandering

Through earth's length and breadth

Subjecting your old self to another syntax

A whole set of grammatical rules

Strangely new to your lips and tips

To expand the map of your mind

Far beyond your home and haven

Yet in the meantime it becomes colonized

By all the puzzling paradoxes

Of this chosen language, for example:

Quicksand can be very slow

Boxing rings are in fact square

And a guinea pig is neither a pig

Nor is it from Guinea

Like you or me

On the Recycling Day

One neighbor took out a blue box

Full of cat skulls and dog legs

Rather than glass or plastic bottles

Another carries out a yellow bag

Containing human bones, mostly children's

Instead of magazines or paper products

A third pushed out a green bin

Filled with failed evils and devils

Where there should be leaves and twigs

Behind every house in a neighboring back alley

The garbage truck is placing a big time bomb

Name Changing

Confucius once said

If the name is not right

Language will carry no might

So my father created my name

By rearranging the sun and moon

Vertically and horizontally

To equip it with all

The forces of yin and yang

Dispersed in the universe

Since I became subject

To a totally different grammar

All people have complained

Or made fun of my name

So harsh and awkward

They conspire to seduce me

To adopt a familiar one

Like Michael in the powerful speech

But to retain the subtle balances

In the wild wild world I wander

To hold my father's sunbeam

With my mother's moonlight

I fiercely refuse to change it

Even though I often feel lost

When the sounds I hear

Do not sound like my name at all

NEKOPIRATI

Greenish Irony

You long to be a Douglas fir
Tall, straight, almost immortal
But you stand like a Peking willow
Prone to cankers, full of twisted twigs

Worse still, you are not so resistant
As the authentic willow that can bend gracefully
Shake off all its unwanted leaves in autumn
When there is a wind blowing even from nowhere

No matter how much sunshine you receive
During the summer, you have nothing but scars
To show off against winter storms
The scars that you can never shake off

NEKOP!!!

Weekend Walking

On a sunny Saturday afternoon

I would lead my inner being

Out of my small rented room

To the Fraser River Valley Park

To let it play with other dogs

Running and jumping wildly

Catching the ball each time I threw

Into the air, the tree shade, the ditch

The bank, the water, and sometimes

The ridge, where it sometimes stopped and stood

Looking beyond the horizon, as if to join the wild

Becoming one and the same with the little could

Drifting freely around, under the western sky

Ischemia: For Yuan Hongqi

In my line of people, especially on my father's side
There never seems to have been ample blood
Running within the arteries behind our chests
No matter how warm-hearted we actually are

As in the case of my father, who used to
Accuse me of being an ill-hearted teenager
My heart muscle is imbalanced
As one side is less infused with blood
Than the other, thus causing palpitation
Short breath, and a strong sense of
Tightness, heaviness or tiredness about life

To diagnose my cardiovascular defection
Neither an echo nor a stress test is needed
For I am keenly aware of my own doomed
Arteries that have been clotted
With too many syllables
Voiced or voiceless
And to make all these sounds flow out of my heart
Is already stressful enough

But even if I could die a sudden and echoless death
I will keep pumping out all these blood-soaked words

On a Rainy Day: For Liu Yu

It rains a lot in Vancouver
Often does this rain remind me of
The days when you sojourned here
With my family, after Father left all of us

While walking in the rain, you would
Recall, under my big umbrella
How you once awaited in a drizzle
With me in a broken basket on your back
To cross the widening river, not far
From our village when I was crying hard
For a large spoonful of flour soup (you were too
Weak and too hungry to produce any milk)

Seeing you do nothing about my hunger
The ferry man asked, *Where is its mom?*
I am his mother! You replied, hot tears rolling down
With the cold raindrops on your childish face
How old are you then? – Almost 17.

It is now raining again in Vancouver, and beyond this rain
Your voice echos aloud on the other side of this world



Chinese Chimes: Nine Detours of the Yellow River

you are unaware of your obscure sources
but you are explicitly sure of the vast sea
as your final destination

you always frown with your brownish wrinkles
but you prefer a nonprofessional smile on your face
your only luggage of life

all your teeth have been lost or pulled out
but you keep licking the muddy banks with your heart
despite your dreams forged

your song is no more than a foam of silence
but you struggle hard to remain afloat on the sea of noise
beyond the borderline of heaven

your love for the loess plateau often overturns and overflows
but you have never flooded the valley of the dragon's mind
since confucius's times

your course ahead is crowded with holes and crevices
but you will deliver your promises to every unevenness
instead of promising the deliveries only

you occupy an enormously tiny place of the world
but you feed all the hopes and wishes of those
with thirsty mouths stranded ashore

you flow down from the sky created by yourself
but you hope to avoid falling on the broken floor
of your own church

you may be tortured or burned to steam
but you will eventually find your impossible way
to the sea of blue sky

NEKOPIRATI

0

meaning empty (for early indians?)

or no entry (to ancient chinese?)

definitely, it is no more, or

no less than a placeholder

between you and me

nothing that can be anything

except the wheel that keeps our civilization rolling

a circle, squeezed to look taller and slenderer

a shape, less round than a hole

but it can suck in a whole world

o that we were not all living within the circle

full of emptiness

Y

yum yum yummy, you have
become so addicted
to this juicy alphabet
you can readily get high
high within your hairless skin
as yellowish as the bank
of the Huanghe River
less sleek than a china crane
but more fragrant than a young yucca
while its pronunciation can lead you
to the very truth you are pursuing, its shape
can grow from an unknown sprout
into a huge Yggdrasil, where your soul
can perch on an evergreen twig, cawing glaringly
towards the autumn setting sun

NEKOT

Siamese Stanzas: Snowflakes

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

summer

to melt

soft and quiet

before you

vanish

tracelessly

in the green

wind

of

time

Single Last Sale

You've long since sold out
Both your sweat and blood
Now you try to sell your heart
Though nobody wants it
Some say the blood is not red enough
Others find the chambers too narrow
Still others think the coronary arteries
Stained with too many feelings
You peddle around, chanting aloud
From street to street
With your heart still fresh
Beating like a frog in your hands
You hope to sell it for a glass of water
Just to cool down your burning voice
So you do not have to sell your soul
Like all other hawkers in the market
Well satiated, but hardly heart-felt

English Irrationalities

There might be love in between gloves

But no egg in eggplant, or ham in hamburger

English muffins did not originate from England

Nor French fries from France

Sweetmeats are actually candies

While sweetbreads are meat though not sweet at all

Readers read, singers sing

But typewriters do not type, nor fingers fing

A mouse can multiply into mice

But a grouse never into grice

People may recite at a play and play at a recital

Their noses run while their feet smell

They park on the driveway, or drive on the parkway

Ship by truck and send cargo by ship

Teachers may be taught, but preachers are never praught

One goose may stand between two geese

So may one tooth between two teeth

But a booth can never between two beeth

If vegetarians eat vegetables

What would so-called humanitarians do to humans?

NEKOPIRATI

30 Monolines

Man becomes established at the age of thirty -- Confucius

1. The meaning of life, if any at all, is to create a meaning for life.
2. This is a graying age, where white is turning black while black white.
3. There is light in every dream we have in darkness.
4. However pitch-dark the entire night is, it can never turn a single snowflake black.
5. There is no distinguishing between black and white, for the color of life is grey to begin with.
6. A house for sale is never a home, while a heart unoccupied is a hotel for rent.
7. Freedom is the thin distance between the fleeing mouse and the chasing cat.
8. Love may be 99% honey and 1% money, while marriage is definitely otherwise.
9. Pleasant or painful, all experiences are as good as cash saved for a long rainy day.
10. Birth throws us out into different times whereas death recalls us back into the same place.
11. No rules are created for their creators.
12. In this age of information, we are all fish swimming freely before the net is towed onto the boat.
13. The more high technologies, the more low minds.
14. Many still very much alive are already stone dead; many already stone dead are still very much alive.
15. On the stage of life, we may not be able to choose the play, but we can choose the roles to play.
16. Comedy can come without romance or finance, but tragedy has to do with either or both.
17. Growth is painful because it means a series of deaths of our pasts, while death can be pleasant because it may result from a series of births of our presents.
18. Misfortune is a peculiar privilege.
19. In memories, roses always look fresher, while thorns less sharp.

20. What we see or read has always been so edited that the truth remains only in the mind of history unwritten.
21. God died long ago; heroes have all disappeared; and here is man left standing alone.
22. The bird flies as high as heaven, but it has to return to the earth to make a nest.
23. Remaining an outsider can give you a sense of superiority, transcendence and peacefulness.
24. Time is the most meticulous makeup master of all.
25. Only those determined to reform others can hope to be reformed.
26. Parting is painful; even more so is having no one to part from.
27. He is happy who is not afraid not to be rich, sexual, famous or powerful.
28. Do some deep thinking about nothing every day, and you will stay healthy, wealthy and wise
29. We all have some questions for heaven, but heaven always remains silent.
30. Like a silkworm, I have contributed all my silk to the human world. If it does not care, why should I?

Selected Word Idioms

No belief without a lie

No business without sin

No character without an act

No courage without rage

No culture without a cult

No entrance without a trance

No Europe without a rope

No freedom without a reed

No friendship without an end

No life without if

No malady without a lady

No manifestation without man

No passage without a sage

No pharmacy without harm

No plant without a plan

No prevention without an event

No slaughter without laughter

No substance without a stance

No think without ink

No truth without a rut

Directory of Directions

North: 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

South: 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
near the horizon
beyond the bare bay

Center: deep from the thick forest

a bird's call echoes

from ring to ring

within each tree

hardly perceivable

before it suddenly

dies off into the closet

of a noisy human mind

West: 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

East: 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

DIOGEN pro culture magazine & DIOGEN pro art magazine -ISSN 2296-0929; ISSN 2296-0937

Publishers online and owners, Peter M. Tase and Sabahudin Hadžialić, Ph. D. candidate

E-mail: contact_editor@diogenpro.com / WWW: <http://www.diogenpro.com/>

until it shoots up

from the cemented roof

NEKOPIRATI

Seasonal Stanzas: Caliber of a Calendar

January

Standing alone

At this coldest spot of the doorway

You pause, wondering which door to

Knock at, which to

Push or pull

So you can go inside

A warm room where you know

You cannot stay for the whole year

Nor would you come out of the same door

But which to enter:

The narrow door with a wide exit

Or the wide one with a narrow exit?

February

Rolling, flowing, dripping

From the palest memories of last year

The melting snow stops moving

But hung everywhere

Like crystals

Against the freezing fits of frantic winds

With the moon always broken

In this shortest month of the pearl

No love can be purified

No couple can enjoy a full honeymoon

March

At this true, truer outset of the year

When the world finally awakens

From its prolonged white hibernation

When we can march forward like soldiers

With the steadiest steps

Every life can now

Give a morning kiss

To earth, to the landscape

Without mask or cosmetics

April

All plants beginning to burgeon

Open their hands and hearts widely

To draw inspirations

From the season

To play with spring spirits

While the ghosts of those doomed to die

Within the year are stalking behind us

Some to the church

Some to the mind

Others to the corners of night

May

Seeds of hope, seeds of love

Deeply planted since last winter

In the fertility of

Dreams, expectations

All come into blossom

In every heart beating against sunlight

On every face beaming with smile

At every twig reaching into the sky

Just when leaves grow fullest, freshest

Before they begin to fade, or fail

June

Come, come to the open fields

Let's embrace most daylight

Of the whole year

In this northern hemisphere

Where we can stay young, younger

Enjoying our honeymoon

With the sun, with light

With warmth

Instead of cold darkness

That is dominating the other

Half of the world

July

Dogs are making human history (right)

When humans deal with dog days (right)

When the sullen, sultry sky witnesses:

Fraud, fervor, frenzy -- yes

It is our inner heat that has been

Warming the whole atmosphere

Like Julius's inflated heart

August

With stone fruits

Like plums, apricots, preaches

Ripening rapidly

In this month of the sickle

It is high time to cut open

The secrets of sunlight

In their hardened hearts

Wrapped with the fleshiest

The juiciest season

September

In the open fields

Nothing, not even a wish is left

Except bare stems

Deep holes, bald twigs

But behind each closed door

Is a cozy room

private or public, full of

Colored fruits, plump seeds

And overflowing minds

As if all ready for the new school

of thought

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 thus
Book a space in heaven?

Yuan Changming, 9-time Pushcart nominee and author of six chapbooks, grew up in rural China, began to learn English at 19, and published monographs on translation before moving to Canada. With a PhD in English, Yuan currently edits *Poetry Pacific* with Allen Yuan in Vancouver, and has poetry appearing in *Best Canadian Poetry* (2009,12,14), *BestNewPoemsOnline*, *Threepenny Review* and 1119 others across 37 countries.