

Pui Ying Wong – Five Poems



Feature Poet

Answers, Not Without Questions

For Jim Moore

I didn't forget to look at the sky
this morning, dirty clouds race across
the canvass and the white gravel road
going up from the cemetery
is slowly winding back to town.
As for the abandoned house
it disappears like time
in the hourglass. Are all H2O matters
God's tears? Improbable but not
impossible, who's to know. The roses
I like are the ones from the streets of Jericho.
I lift them from a poem that reaches
me like a passcode.
Joy and sorrow are the twins that made
a pact not to wear the same clothes,
but never separated. When I was nineteen
I loved everything about nineteen.
It was not hard to leave the gray forest
for the wide veranda of the golden ship.
How would I know that its circuitous journey is
to make its way back to the harbor? It's still
out there, I can attest. Then, all
is not lost. The willow exists
in memory's casket
in that perpetual
summer, my hair growing so fast
and smell of grass, dew, and rust.

Light

--the serrated light of the sun
cuts each one of us—Tim Suermond

It went for my throat
and I was starved of air.

It sent my heart flying
and it landed like a lost pilot.

It slashed my left leg
and it jerked and tried to run.

My right leg was however only
bone-bruised and wanted to stay.

The same light let me see
a little flower between two abysses.

Birds In Trees

Birds in trees, trees in shadows, along the Charles River.

“*Make Something Happen*”, a shirt on a long distance runner says.

Behind the liquor warehouse, next to stacked pallets
and crushed beer cans—
a young magnolia in bloom, as if drunk.

T says Poetry should be a little *outside time*, but poets are impatient.

Poems live by headlines outlived by headlines.

The end of the world is, a fact. Meanwhile refugee boats,
bullets in schoolyards are also facts.

An apple fell out of my hand, the thumping sound it made
on the hard floor is a sound seldom heard
and surprised me.

I have been too careful.

Remember the holiday dance with the live swing band,
the one sponsored by the Alzheimer Society? How

giddy we were when an elder
called us "*the young people*".

Nowhere can actually be *somewhere*
is the kind of thought I think on flat days.

From the height the birds are studying perspectives.
The streets split and split,
letting the sun blind them all.

Night, The Wharf

Gradually lights go out from the beach houses.
The pier quiet as sleeping fish---
and the gulls, busy dropping
clams earlier, are gone too. The moon,
our faithful guide looks on,
vivid as a first memory.
Only the sea, after an exhaustive journey,
recedes, drawing a long breath
like someone who's arrived
at the destination, suddenly realizing
the return has started.

East River

The new ferries make
Circular runs

Old signs aglow
On the waterfront

Sugar-plant and Pepsi
-Cola plant Dark

Warehouses are back
Making myths

Glass condos mirror
Lights and shadowing

Faces the searchers'
Intense searching

A loud helicopter
On board the latest

Nouveau riche
Comes rather close

A shock of red
Like a lone

Strayed cardinal
Somewhere in the city a canyon

Hides humongous rocks
Of the once ice-age

Pui Ying Wong is the author of two full-length books of poetry: *An Emigrant's Winter* (Glass Lyre Press, 2016) and *Yellow Plum Season* (New York Quarterly Books, 2010)—along with two chapbooks. A new book, *The Feast*, is forthcoming from MadHat Press. She has received a Pushcart Prize. Her poems have appeared in *Ploughshares*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Plume Poetry*, *New Letters*, *Zone 3* and *The New York Times*, among many others. Born and raised in Hong Kong, she lives in Cambridge Massachusetts with her husband, the poet Tim Suermondt.