舒巷城:詩七首

Seven Selected Poems

By Shu Xiangcheng Translated by Eva Hung

Resurrection

Do you know? In the dim horizon where the sea touches the sky Red clouds of dawn rise slowly, Afterglow—from how many centuries ago?—Of the pearl divers' sorrowful blood.

Do you know?
In the blissful smiles of
A baby's eyes
I see the body of spring
Bruised, battered and buried ten thousand years ago.

Do you know? Trees have fallen; trees have fallen and died. We have coal; we have coal.

May, 1966

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Shu Xiangcheng was born and educated in Hong Kong. He started writing during the Anti-Japanese war, and left Hong Kong for China in 1942, during the Japanese occupation of Hong Kong. After his return to Hong Kong in 1948, he gradually established himself as a leading poet as well as a writer of fiction and prose.

Anchor

The anchor drops sunset and dusk Down to the depths of the sea. The ship Stays, sleeps, No destination tomorrow. Starlight from a century ago Vanishes in the distance; perhaps A moon will rise from the sea tonight And a hundred-year-old spirit will be buried Buried in the deepest recess of the sea. In the rapid currents of time the ghost-ship Leaves nothing but broken spars.

The anchor sinks. The steel-grey harbour Rusts. Someday in broad daylight On an enchanted shore, the rusted anchor Will become a block of glimmering marble.

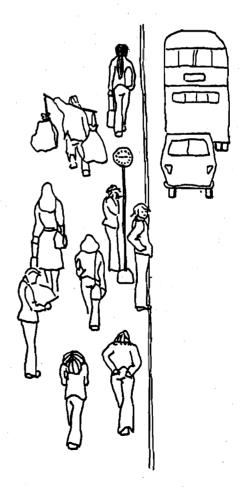
September, 1967

Birdsong in a City

They're selling "electronic birdsong machines" for \$16 on the streets For we hardly ever hear birdsong

No larks in the city beating their wings under an azure sky No cranes singing or cuckoos calling From bus-stop to bus-stop What leaves there are have withered. Against the serried steel window-frames No birds homing to nest. Who knows Whither the exiled geese rejoin their files Or in which wood the thrush hides its sweet songs

So, might as well buy an "electronic birdsong machine" to take home



Walking past a Monumental Mason

These days I often walk past
A mason's in the neighbourhood
And see a young man
By the marble slabs squatting
A chisel in his left hand a hammer in his right
Merrily humming a tune
Carving someone's tombstone
There is nothing funny about it, I reflect:
He is alive. He is young
Why should death be on his mind

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Cable Car on Victoria Peak

It cannot soar
Like the iron birds in the sky:
Tethered to the mountain
With shackles of steel
It crawls
Between the tilting years
Watching the sea underfoot turn into land
It crawls
On the border of a metropolis
Watching the sun set onto a skyscraper.

Ten Lines

So many nights
The lamplight on my manuscript paper
Spilled onto Mother's emaciated face, her wrinkles
In this place where land is gold

We work In undernourished space Rest In narrow beds

And that is how my mother died She was cremated.

January, 1972

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Seven Lines

His mother lived under the same roof with him His only kin But he was tired of her, and tired of The words she repeated dozens of times a day

That period of his life, that debt—
For the first time he understood his mother's loneliness
One night after her death.

September 1987