Moon Over Melbourne

& other poems

OUYANG YU

Royal Festival Hall
on the South Bank

Poetry Library

Royal Festival Hall,
London SE1 8XX
Telephone 020 7921 0943/0664

Funded by
THE
ARTS
COUNCIL
OF ENGLAND

Poetry Library
130964
sbc

Moon over Melbourne

& other poems

WITHDRAWN FROM THE POETRY LIBRARY

Also by Ouyang Yu:

Poetry (in English)
Songs of the Last Chinese Poet
Two Hearts, Two Tongues and Rain-Coloured Eyes
New and Selected Poems
Foreign Matter

(in Chinese)
Wo cao
B xilie / B sequence
Summer in Melbourne

Fiction (in English)
The Eastern Slope Chronicle

(in Chinese)
The Angry Wu Zili

Non-Fiction (in English)
Representations of Australia and Australians in China and Hong Kong, 1985-1995

(in Chinese)
Representing the Other: Chinese in Australian Fiction: 1888-1988

Translations into Chinese
Germaine Greer: The Female Eunuch
Xavier Herbert: Capricornia
Robert Hughes: the Shock of the New
Alex Miller: The Ancestor Game
Christina Stead: The Man who Loved Children

Translations into English
In Your Face: Contemporary Chinese Poetry in Translation

Ouyang Yu

Moon over Melbourne

& other poems

POETRY LIBRARY
SOUTH BANK CENTRE
ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL
LONDON
SE1 8XX

Shearsman Books
Exeter

THE POETRY LIBRARY

This revised edition published in the United Kingdom in 2005 by
Shearsman Books Ltd
58 Velwell Road
Exeter EX4 4LD

ISBN 0-907562-85-X

First edition published in Australia in 1995 by Papyrus Press, Melbourne.

Copyright © Ouyang Yu, 1995, 2005.

The right of Ouyang Yu to be identified as the author of this work has been asserted by him in accordance with the Copyrights, Designs and Patents Act of 1988. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publisher.

Acknowledgements

Some parts of this work previously appeared in *Antipodes* (USA), *Australian New Writing* (ed. Helen Daniel & Robert Dessaix, Picador, Melbourne, 1993), *Beyond Outback*, *Blast*, *Bystander*, *Gathering Force*, *Perseverance*, *Poet's Collection 1993-94*, *Overland*, *Hecate*, *Kunapipi* (Denmark), *Social Alternatives*, *Southern Review*, *Southerly*, *Tirra Lirra*, *Ulitarra Literary Magazine*, *Westerly*.

Cover:
The photograph on the front cover is reproduced by courtesy of the author. The portrait of the author on the back cover is reproduced by courtesy of Alex Miller.

The publisher gratefully acknowledges financial assistance for its publishing programme 2005-2007 from Arts Council England.

CONTENTS

Death of Sex

Death of Sex 10
The River 11
Birds 12
Making Love With Time 13
Sex Notice 16
Untitled — *The plums in my garden are red* 19
Untitled Again 19
Untitled For This Season 20
Spring 22
Condom? 22
With Whom? 23
A Chinese Sojourner in Australia 23
If Winter Comes 24
I Love You 25
Tell me what should I do 26

I, A Racist Chinese Father

I, A Racist Chinese Father 28
Word Prison: A Lesson 30
In a Shop of Rings 31
The Solitary Chinese 32
Fuck you, Australia 34
A Lesson on Eyes 35
Title To Be Titled 36
Ways of Not Seeing 37

In Australia

Song for an Exile in Australia 39
Two Emperors Met in Melbourne 40
That Day Nothing Happened in Melbourne 42
Going Mad 43
Spring at Kingsbury, Melbourne 44
One of Them 45
After Death, After Orgasm 46
Alien 47

And Footnotes 48
Birthday For Nothing 49
Homeless Again 50
Reading Magazines 51
Seeing Double 52
Memory of a Night at Melbourne 53
Death a Daily Necessity 54
Word, My Last Saviour 55
Winter 55

In Lieu of Autobiography

In Lieu of Autobiography 58
Names 58
Interview with Yu 60
The Poet's Wife 63
Poets 64

Moon over Melbourne

moon over melbourne 67
A Different Moon 69
Untitled — *to be poor and content* 69
Untitled — *the moon is made for love* 70
A Night Walk 71

Translating Myself

Translating Myself 73
The Romance of a Small Town 74
Undergraduate Life in Wuhan 75
Untitled — *I stood silent in the darkness* 76
Untitled — *A man asked me to write a poem for him* 76
I Have Said It All Wrong 77
Life 77
Loneliness 78
Untitled — *A man comes up to me* 78
A Blind Fortune-teller Tells Me That 79
Moon 79
The Moon 80
Untitled — *I hate the spring* 81
Life Full of Darkness 81

Untitled — *so close to me* 82
Untitled — *The whole half-transparent night* 83
Strangling 83
Untitled — *My baby was crawling in bed* 84
Untitled — *I despise myself as a poet* 85

Untitled Because That's The Way It Is

Untitled Because That's The Way It Is 87
Untitled For No Reason At All 87
Once More Untitled for Another Australian Autumn 88
Untitled For Myself 88
Untitled — *two hands tied to writing* 89
Untitled — *computer is such an imperfect thing* 90
Untitled — *someday i said to myself* 90
untitled — *suddenly he said he* discovered *me* 90
Untitled — *the established poet was quick* 91
Title Forthcoming 91
Titles For a Poem 92
Making Love Making Poetry 94
Feet 95
The Love-Maker's Soliloquy 97
Written by a Chinese Prostitute 97

City Impressions

On the MET 101
At Syndal 102
Down Smith Street 103
Conversations With Computer 104
After Reading 'Invasion Literature' 108
China 109
Westernized 109
Revolution For Australia 110
Untitled — *when he went back to China* 111
Australia, Let Me Teach You How To Be Old 112
Untitled — *To me West has always stood for* 113
A Form To Declare Before Departure From Australia 114
Untitled — *Summer night* 115
Untitled For Always 115
untitled for now 116

THE POETRY LIBRARY

untitled for a number of times already 116
Untitled — *Poets / I'm sick of your . . .* 117
Democracy 118
I Thought That They Were Different 118
Her Story 119
At 38 120
Talking With The Writer 121
Being Difficult 123
At The Anti-Racism Conference 124
them/us 127

Death of Sex

Death of Sex

is something he'd like to write about but is afraid that he can't write
very well about
for so many things have been subject(ed) to death that even the poem
that he is writing now may soon become another death
should i remind you of those deaths:
death of god
death of literature
death of love
three most important things in life
for me at least
the only thing left undying is really human beings
who are so everlastingly eternal that you wonder what to do about
them too

let me come to the point
where she was asking me to go faster and faster
at 100 miles per hour 120 miles 150 miles 180 miles 200 miles per hour
despite the red speed camera of our sensory systems
the number of thrusts of positions of entries and exits of intercourses
and discourses and main courses of frequencies of techniques of
different
skins smells smiles stains spheres of videos books mags etc etc etc
is just something a bit too much
so that i ended up being hard
and unable to come
and told her:

you know how men die?
they die with their cocks bone hard rigidly speaking
no not like women
who die with something like the stain of sperm
yellowish whitish on their crotch
you know

having said that
you look down at your own self rigidly hard
staring up at you with one accusing eye
that shows hollow inside

The River

The river dies at night
it does
without warning

when my clock stops dead
when my pen starts
scratching sands

you are not dead yet
i can set you ticking
any moment

a mechanical thing
you have a life of your own
in spite of them

but drying up
where have you run to
the clean white tissue?

a substitute
you've been going strong
since times untold

suppose one day they
run out of it
will you stop flowing?

the substitute
day and night
howling to all directions

you die
at this hour of the night
when I live

when I only live
when I live all over again

Birds

Playing
Playing with the little birds
Between my tree trunks
Will she fly
Will she fly far
The red bird
That for years
Longs for a long flight
Into the cloudless land
The green bird
That sprouts shooting from the nightly soil
Into so many sweet eyes
The white bird
Oh the white bird
That paints everything pure
That floods from sky to sky

That always dies
After the intensest joy
At the strangling hands

Fly, off and away
My little birds, red green and white
Never come back
To this love-desert of mine

Nests there
At every nook of heart
Elsewhere

Making Love With Time

Dying, dying every night
at the breast of time
dripping with unwanted semen

1

making love under poetry
under music
making love
to time
that sings in these things
hold the face of time in your hands
the dumb and deaf and make it scream
with ecstasy of coming . . .

time in a timeless land
sells herself like a whore
touching your sex with her pointed shoes
making you come with dark nights and eyes

2

making love to an organ
an organ that opens and closes
like a consertina that plays
under the enemy fire

making love into the seconds of time
matching each with a rhyme
that ticks precisely

stretching it like a noodle
that splits into infinitesimal
as thin as an idea of coming

making love to poetry
holding the pen between your
fingers/eyes/legs

3

making love to the time
pinning her hands down like
a Chinese eight
or up
like a V

the movement is your movement
not hers
up and down up and down
the keyboard of
a piano by an invisible hand of
eternity

your face does not matter
for beauty is but a thing of the market
your face matches mine
inscrutable even in ecstasy

making love to me you give back all you have
your timeless seconds that die instantly

making love to the time
through her deep tunnel of past present and future
to impregnate her with semens of de/con/struction

making love to the time
as if every second is a behind or a before
to grab at or thrust in

4

making love to the time
putting seeds carefully
into holes of each second

waiting for the seconds to grow
into cells of love
in the body of time

making time to love
in a sleepless bed
that flows in rhythm

making timeless love
or loveless time
making love and time to a T

making love to page or pages
of minuted sex or sexed minutes
that pin all images up on time

making love to one poem only
that has one single line
the line of least resistance

making love to eyes
between ice and fire
into the eyes for fish

making love to ears
through both ear rings
the music of fuck

making love to nose
one at a time
breathing in the notes

THE POETRY LIBRARY

making love through so many tunnels
of time simultaneously
always with an eye for more openings

an ear for more rings of love
a nose for more breaths taken
making love to tongues

alien to each other
the more accessible
the tastier being tongue in cheek

and everywhere
making love to things pointed
the long and short hands of the c(l)ock

Sex Notice

1

I have come to this country for 90 days
90 days without a fuck

I've seen your dirty books dirty videos
and dirty, dirty mags

I want your women I want your girls
I want whoever is willing

Your sun is cold your moon is hot
your suburb is too too dead

and your city is arty your money thirsty
your life farty and lousy

so instead of boring me let me bore you
with a brand new china-made flute

to play you a tune of starved-love
for five thousand years

to flood you with the fresh cum
of the yellow river and the yangtse

so if you want to come and be my love
call me at six six six plus triple sex

2

you knew how I spend my nights here, girl,
the nights that I would have spent with the moon
the red-hot summer moon in bed in China
with a frog-filled creek running low below
with lotus flower wafting through
with a thousand memories, bitter, sweet or sour,
and with ceaseless thrusting, jabbing and penetrating

ai, the melbourne nights
don't tell me it's a modern city
with shiny cars and everlasting gardens
with steely green lawns and stony unsmiling faces
and uncommunicative phones
(to whom the ring tolls?)
and the all attentive t.v.
(why should I be watched at all?)
and the non-existent neighbours
(have we ever exchanged a word?)

but, girls, where are you hiding yourselves
at this time of the night
when I'm masturbating comfortlessly
against pages and pages of shit?
I feel cold I feel old I feel uglier
for my skin is peeling off my hair turning
grey my body wasting away
I'm losing myself

but the silence of the night is devoid
of meaning as devoid of flesh
only you sleeping beauty is singing far away
of my second by second death

3

well, somehow, these things are so unfamiliar to me now:

the gazing longingly at the red high-heels
the snail slow arousing of the primitive animal
the unbuttoning unzipping and undoing—

my ten fingers wouldn't know how to do these things
my lips have clean forgotten how to say 'I love you'
my heart is turning into a stone

and my cock
he knows only my hand
and the loo

4

so if you are interested in making a little extra money
phone me write to me or come directly

teach me how to handle my next 1001 nights
how to avoid death in a dead place
how to make the phone shriek with ecstasy
how to make the stunning actresses walk down from the screen

how to use my penis more creatively
    to know more
    to crave for more
    to grow younger and stronger with each use

instead of becoming this pen held in my hand
that ejaculates these dirty lines that whiten the old ugly cold nights

Untitled

The plums in my garden are red
for summer
heart-red
each containing a hard seed
a heart-shaped jade
will birds come eat them or carry them away
eat them drop them seeds
wherever that does or does not need them?

oh I'm too ripe
my seeds hard on the verge of bursting
will you my birds
come flying over to peck at those drops of honey
at crack-points
of my broken heart

will you?

Untitled Again

Maybe I'll find you in a street
        with no name
or a library with no books
        or a computer
with no word-processing capability
        or you'll find me
in a passing car whose window
        mirrors you
and the window behind you that mirrors
        you and me in my window
or in a room that's surrounded with
        space that defies and denies
love and everything that goes with it

Ay, a street without a name is
        mapless
a library without books is
        wordless
oh yes a window that mirrors
        infinite images is forever passing through

And a room that's embraced in space
        is forever the black hole of a form

to be filled in with

Untitled For This Season

last week for a whole seven days
he was unusually potent
he rented two tapes and had sex with her on the red old creaking sofa
watching them having sex on the screen at a close range
and when she was gone in the morning for work
he thinking of last night put on the video again
and masturbated himself to coming so that the screen became an
        orgasmic
steaming screaming locomotive
then when she came back wearing kid high-heels he bought her in
        shanghai
the city that produces the sexiest high-heels in the world
and black skin-tight underwear he reached for her and had it again
and again the next day when he brought back from the city a video
        of real
action that showed all the red hot steaming meat that came in and out
promiscuous bodies all the time
which somehow bored her and she did not want it again
so he did it to himself with the moving images
and her high heel cupping his balls and prick
and shot into its pointed head
he never knew why he did that
not even when she was having it and asking him why

until this morning when he drove her to work
a wattle or 'golden harmonious joyful flower' as it is called in chinese
parachutes into view like a full-blooded blonde
fresh from a s/perm shop
then another
another
until the whole frosted green place
is flowing with their golden dance
and a vague seed of an idea came into his mind
perm sperm sprint spring
ah ha
Spring
Spring
it's already spring
for it's late july
with wattle bosom blossoms everywhere in melbourne

and it suddenly dawned on him why
the x-rated video shops were alive with customers
and why he became so powerfully potent
and kept coming
second coming
third coming
till
seventh coming

Spring

this could be the season of sowing seeds
this could be the season of making love
of eating love
of buying love
of fighting love
of etceterasing love
in China

this is the season of hating love
in Australia
of shitting love
of vormitting love
of masturbating love

this is the season of me
writing love
without love

Condom?

no i don't want them bloody cunt-damns
why
it's me first time i want your mouth and your tongue
not only that
i want your eyes i want it to trace your brow
and enter one at a time until you see nothing but red
and i want your ears in at one and out at the other
until you hear nothing but the sound of fucking

i want you oh i want you
let me fuck you blind and deaf
and plant me in you
so we become one

Wow, it cums again

With Whom ?

Somehow
the kiss is cold
not as exhilarating as I supposed
though the lips are red, bloody red
and well parted
the hair too short but the tips very sharp
the teeth sweet, the eyes spark
trouble is I can't get hold
of your lower part
and when our lips touch
you prattle away undisturbed

Gosh, how calm you're, so near
but for the coloured glass
between US

A Chinese Sojourner in Australia

Since there is no one to love
and no one to love me

I'm more contented with life
and more convinced of death

So out of the solitude of the darkness
I rise & turn on the lights

To write myself
this little ditty on the crumpled quilt

To help remember this loveless night

THE POETRY

If Winter Comes

Now you often tell you
if you must die you'd die in a country
where at least you have a woman to go to

Not like this wishy-washy place
where not even a female bird looks down at you
not even a female kangaroo

Are you going to spend your 3 phd years
festooning all walls with fucking red meat
amidst which you perform your weekly ritual?

Or . . . what are you going to do?
the impossibility of family to come
are you going to find a pro(sub)stitute?

Oh, no, but the women, oh, it's always the women
that you want, that you need but never get
that are cold, so cold, so damned chilling cold!

note: 'phd' means 'post/humous dick'

I Love You

I don't remember having said that at all
when was the last time
well
that was when I asked or implored you
to say or to repeat it in bed
before it's coming
say I love you
say I love you
say iloveyou
or I wouldn't come
or was it the other time
when you vowed you'd never love me
unless I loved you
how cruel you
to know my shame so:

an ugly man who'd never been fallen
in love with
and had only his love to offer
like a beggar
his hands:
dirty, begging, never ceasing
always empty

to be filled with you

Tell me what should I do

if i fall in love with someone at first sight

what, if she's married
and, me too?

should i wait
till too old to care?

or should you
till too old to dare?

but how am i going to know
that you know that i know

talking to you or to me
like to anyone else?

if dreams could be arranged, like meeting
i would that we went there every night

if one could live two lives
i would spend the other one with you

with you?
but how you changed on the phone!

the style is never the man
nor voice the woman

it's all so unreal
that contact is the end of contact

I, A Racist Chinese Father

I, A Racist Chinese Father

The other day my son came back from school asking me father what did it mean you fucking indian i told him in chinese what it meant and could mean and asked why he told me someone in his class said that to him i don't remember if i told him to go to his teacher about it or to answer back but later on it turned out that he mispronounced it while the correct form should be you fucking idiot

again the other day he came back with a story that someone in school pushed him hard from behind and he fell to the ground and hurt himself badly so i spent half the night teaching him kongfu in how to defend himself and if necessary how to hit back HIT HARD ON THE NOSE OR THE MOUTH my blood was running wild and fast while i was shouting this but his mother became fearful real fearful saying stop such nonsense if your son really hurt others he'd be and you'd be punished but who was punished who had hurt my son so badly i yelled

story after story came back each day ever since with my son that this boy pinched him hard on the ear and that girl pulled down his pants for fun and this big fellow came directly to him and slapped across his face so much so that it sounded all like fiction that my wife began blaming him for all the trouble he'd caused saying why they all hit you hurt you call you names there must have been something wrong with you with your behaviour with your identity with your alien self and i could only mutter to myself and to him you bastard useless bastard why didn't you answer back why didn't you hit back why didn't you eye an eye tooth a tooth why didn't you KILL stop such nonsense my wife was screaming screeching i was afraid terribly afraid my son was crying softly that they were so big for him like hairy apes

people told me that i could go report to his teacher that such things were common enough in australia and for children even teachers believed that it's part of growing up in any society

but i was so angry with my boy who never seemed to take it to heart like me he'd come back and tell me dad the big brother next door was very nice to me that day for he patted me on the shoulder and said we are friends by the way the big brother next door was the guy who once burnt my son's chest with a burning cigarette butt and stuck a chewed gum between his shirt and naked back but my boy would go on saying nice things about these PEOPLE

i know i would never do the same thing being older and more chinese that if someone suddenly stopped greeting me i'd do the same to him that if someone called me names i'd call him names hit me i'd hit him kill me i'd kill him that if they wouldn't telephone me i wouldn't telephone them that if they wouldn't speak to me i wouldn't speak to them that if they don't come to me i wouldn' t go to them that if they write to spite me i would write to spite them if possible in chinese you know not many of them know how to speak chinese although they pretend they are china experts they are so stupid you know drinking so much that they produce a lot of idiots although they like calling others bloody idiots because they are ashamed of their own oh come on boy you don't understand this you are such a kid

today he again asked me as if i knew everything dad what did you fucking dickhead mean and why did they sing ching chong chinaman to me i asked who said that who sang that did they do that to you YES what did it mean ignore it it's not important it's bad did you report to you teacher no why not don't tell me if you don't do that or simply answer back you fucking dickhead you fucking aussie bastard you fucking fucking fufukingking

fortunately his mother was not by this time

Word Prison: A Lesson

what does it mean, word prison? your son asked
well, word means word and prison, prison, you said
why word and prison?
because, you began, then the sheer difficulty in explaining
such an odd combination overwhelmed you
to a boy being brought up in australia though born chinese
having never seen a prison not to say a word prison
you nevertheless began:

what it means is that in ancient china
one can be imprisoned or even killed for saying something wrong
or writing something wrong
why?, Son asked
Because, you stopped feeling incompetent to go on
because, well, don't ask me so much
what it means is that YOU can be put in prison or killed
for saying something like:
Father I dislike you
or Mother I hate you
That is why there is an old chinese saying that goes:
disasters come out of the mouth of a person
(or a pen) the latter part being your own invention
anyway you are lucky in australia
you can say anything you like or dislike about australia without being
persecuted or killed
remember the story you read
where a Ching official wrote a poem with these two lines:
'the clear breeze is so ignorant
why does he turn over my pages in such a wild manner?'
the word 'clear' sounds exactly the same as 'Ching' in chinese
which means the 'Ching Dynasty'
the poet was executed

word prison, Son murmured to himself, amused and interested
how nice if i could put the one in prison who sang 'ching chong
chinaman'
to me the other day or beat the guy with justice who called me
'you fucking Chink pig'

not so here in australia, Son, the father sighed
they hadn't even invented the word prison yet

In a Shop of Rings

the middle-aged lady's eyes

between smiling and unsmiling
welcoming and unwelcoming

were not pretty

they regarded me regard them
without response

she was talking business seriously

i was thinking to myself
she should at least know i spoke good english

what was this called?

ring size stick, and this?
ring sizers

later i went to a shop window

and saw myself with hair all right
only slightly dishevelled

and my grey suit all right

except my face and particularly my eyes
as well as my teeth

all a bit out of the ordinary

THE POETRY LIBRARY

so much so that when i thought of her unlovely eyes
i wrote this to remind me of

the day in a shop in Great Southland

when i asked a pair of unsmiling eyes what it was called
and they answered ring size stick

The Solitary Chinese

It is too late already when he realizes
that the land he comes to does not welcome him

He supposes he has come to freedom
well catered for all basic instincts

He has thought wouldn't it be nice if
I meet everybody and tell them about my place

with one of the longest rivers in the world
and the tallest mountain until he

sees the futility for these kangaroo people
are only interested in the dry bush as kangaroos

He had imagined before coming that telephones
would be ringing 24 hrs letters keep pouring in

so would be friends acquaintances strangers
everybody on the streets

until he keeps reminding himself to forget these things
because in this kangaroo land no one cares

not even an artist or writer the so-called
engineers of human souls don't apply

their own souls probably in some sort of danger
to say nothing of taking care of others

he is caught between going back and staying on
neither has any attraction for him

koala people could afford to patronize
by offering him limited years of servility

he could probably settle down somewhere
in West Heidelberg in a loaned not too expensive house

and pretend to look not too cheap to go
too often to garage sales or Sunday markets

and be one of them but hang on
what happens to this early ambition of his

which is unrealizable in this emu land
that cares only for tea breaks beer all sorts of wine

Sunday Churches holidays more holidays
that cultivates neither mind nor skin

both are so rough and smelly
that he looks back to his own kind

realizing that beauty is born and bred
only in deep waters and tall mountains

that a plain land is what makes
plain be—but can't I do whatever

I like in a land of freedom
meant for kangaroos and the like

realizing again that he is Chinese
he gives up being unwelcome in an unwelcoming land

his identity and becomes
solitary again being neither

Fuck you, Australia

from a penniless gambler

when i was boarding the CAAC plane for home which is of course
china
i said to you through the arse hole of a window:
fuck you australia!
you thought i had made myself a millionaire didn't ya
digging for gold in your cheap sunshine
you thought i had wanted to get a kangaroo certificate
in order to live on the dole like a cheap unemployed fat man
you thought i had wanted to learn your english that called me nimes
that fucked whenever you could anybody especially us
you thought i had liked your women because we were essentially
an immoral people that's right we came to you to look for fun in sex
in the first place because yours was supposed to be a country
flowing with gold and fuck-holes
you thought i was every bit unlike you
funny inscrutable wily cunning miserly full of dark designs
you thought in your heart of hearts that we were bad
not fit to share the continent with you

fuck you australia
i said to myself as if i was australia
i said that i'd go back to china and tell everybody how vastly cheap
is australia and mean
i said that i'd forget you as soon as this very second when i was
fastening my seat belt my shit belt
i said though remembering that i had never fucked anybody yet
that i'd come back one day and pick up an australian woman as my
tenth concubine

fuck you, australia

A Lesson on Eyes

slit-eyed almond-eyed slant-eyed and slopes
that unchanging view of the Western image of the East
never seems able to absorb the fluidity of other vocabularies
stunted by their own bloated sense of superiority

you told your audience of blonde hair yellowish hair and black hair
that in your language there are at least one hundred ways of describing
one's eyes
the most common type is
double-folded eyes
as favoured over single-folded eyes
then there are
red-phoenix eyes
rat eyes
bulging eyes
golden-fish eyes
thousand-li eyes
watery eyes
scar eyes
drunken eyes
triangle eyes
green-light eyes
thief eyes
fighting cock eyes
ox eyes
sand eyes
ocean white eyes
and many more
not just those three you know

now look at me
which eyes have i got?

Title To Be Titled

australia is anything but empty
a land full of memories

a friday night with nowhere to go and no one calling
readily recalls words like *kanxi* or *shangjie*
which mean going to the theatre and to the street literally
and to get a feeling of the people and of the season more figuratively

an august street lined with flowering trees as pink as the japanese
cherry
is a constant reminder of something infinitely more fascinating
more lively and more human with a multiple feminine touch

birds singing in a crude voice of a spring that looks occasionally like a
winter or autumn are reminiscent of those nights ringing
with *bugu* bird everywhere
such an omnipresent bird busy spreading grains of music
on the landscape of the lonely man's untroubled dreams

and those australians or whoever that look white bushy and rough
who thrust a middle finger out at you or shout at you with half of
his body
out of the car window or simply avoid looking at you
these are the things that put you sharply in mind of your strong
desire for
a freedom that you had vowed to flee for even at the expenses of
your dear life

now that you are dead killed by the australian
your body that has never been celebrated by poetry or even touched
will merge into the memory of an unconscious
and will only appear in the media of a medium designed to arouse
sympathy but can only lead to apathy

Ways of Not Seeing

one way of not seeing is a remote control
that senses your approaching and looks away well in advance

another way of not seeing is staring into your eyes
and right through until s/he sees someone behind you

many other ways of not seeing are there in australia
for example a writer could talk about you without even wanting to
see you

until you learn and master their ways of not seeing
by simply looking at them as if looking at some non-human objects
a tree or a blade of grass or a kangaroo or anything that does not
mean anything

In Australia

Song for an exile in Australia

in a loveless season in Australia
the body is passing through the sun of spring
decaying gradually disconnected with life
so I cover up every face of clocks
to forget time
to forget every face that lifts up from under the white shroud of
corpses
the spring has lost its power of medium
and the body can't understand its own meaning
woodenly I wait for the coming of dusk
knowing very well that nothing will come out of it
like every disappearing season
that will not leave her shadows

in a poemless season in Australia
I read my poems of the past
like a stranger in hundreds of years
reading books left to him by his ancestors
I see thousands of lines
shoot past the edge of dreams
but my paralysed brain can't pull itself out of the wheel-chair of
imagination
like my decayed body

in a riverless season in Australia
the boundless grass land drives me crazy
for my skin is thirsty for the baptism of murky rivers
and my train of thoughts is chasing waves that can rush a thousand
miles a second
listen the lawn-mower next door starts its routine again
cutting hair for the spring mourning for the season
hoping to find a fault in the ground
where there is a fault there is life running

in a season without languages in Australia
I have lost my weight in undeveloped no-person's land
like a wild devil roaming

THE POETRY LIBRA

I sow my language into the alien soil
where it sends forth such strange flowers that no one recognizes
and all of a sudden I find my tongue
held between two languages like a vice

in a season of self-exile in Australia
I feel doubly alienated doubly illusioned
the death of the old world has such weird attractions
while the light of the new world has somehow darkened

in a season without love in Australia
my body my poetry
in a season without languages in Australia
my interference my waves of electricity
in a season without death in Australia
I see the black cat acquiring an eternal existence in the afternoon sun
and I see the reflection of a car above the distant trees

in a season without imagination
in a desireless season
in Australia
in Australia

in Australia

Two Emperors Met in Melbourne

his name is liu bang the name of that famous emperor who united china some two thousand years ago after conquering xiang yu by forcing him to commit suicide by the Wu River and my name is li yu the name of the emperor who lost his crown due to excessive indulgence in writing erotic poetry and enjoying what was known as the music that could cause countries to fall

we met at the dinner table with a hundred chinese dishes at box hill melbourne one night and talked about many things liu bang

who turned out to be a hong kong businessman spotting creamy coloured western suit and tie told me that he had been in australia for more than twenty years now that his father had been here before him that his sons were studying in hong kong because he did not want them to lose the chinese culture that australia had no culture to speak of being a country with only a short history of two hundred years while china had twenty times as many that if it was possible he'd really come down to take over the whole of australia if he could become the president of china and could force all the peasants to come to this country who cares at all

did i say anything being not an emperor but a student studying a culture without culture i thought that how like that emperor who lost his country through poetry and music was me who had already lost his country to one billion people claiming to the same ancestry and was trying again to lose this country but to whom the country not being my own in the first place how could i even lose it but let me not argue the case and instead just recite a poem by that emperor to you liu bang:

> wordless, i went up to the western mansion
> the moon like a hook
> a clear autumn was locked
> in the depth of the lonely *wutong* courtyard
> unscissorable
> un-sort-outable
> is the sadness felt at parting
> and in the heart of hearts:
> a different taste of things

how could i tell you that it was my father who taught me the poem lying in his cancer ward and that countless times the poem came back over a span of thousand years from the exiled and imprisoned emperor like from a prehistoric radio station that projected those waves of instincts onto me as if he had already known that there was destined to be some one in a future of uncertain age who'd pick up his message and who being so exiled and transplanted that he had to translate it with an alien language that could not even bring out the beautiful rhyme and could not find an echo in a plastic sea of faces

never mind the emperor hong kong businessman liu bang said as if
reading my mind we'd meet one day and discuss things over a cup of
coffee in the city

and that sort of wound things up for the night of emporial meeting

That Day Nothing Happened in Melbourne

That day you wanted to write poems but you had nothing to write with
you hadn't brought a piece of paper you hadn't a pen
no one could help
everybody was driving his own car double screened by wind-shield
from the rear mirror the other person could see you
but you could only see another one in another car
while the green light was urging you to go on

your home was a garden
with deep grass and stable flowers
the sun had got some shadow of trees and wind in it
you'd got problems but you couldn't
nothing could make you happen

the coming of rain was bizarre with sunshine and impatience
a red raincoat was passing slowly through the grassy path
as long as a century
you were watching drops of rain being absorbed into the texture
        of the window pane
until the figure in the drop disappeared and nothing else happened

you burst into shouting and saw the black sun-bathing cat climb
        over the wall
your son was sitting head low on the stone used to hold back the door
reading time in his cupped hands
you could do nothing but look at the wind dancing on the branches
in unison with that singing bird's preying: nothing nothing nothing
        ever happens in Melbourne

that day the six-thirty SBS went on with its routine of world news
as usual
that day coffee-drinkers did not forget to glance through their age
of the day
that day you thought you could do something that would shake the
world to its foundation—
but you were scribbling and scribbling and nothing really happened

you had lost history and yesterday
they had been in a river into which you had only to bury your head
to see—
in Melbourne all you have is now
that has nothing to happen

Going Mad

in a nondescript australian suburb
i'm going steadily mad:

i pick up the telephone receiver and sit there
for hours listening to its soothing buzz
or i spit into everything i eat and eat it
or dream this long long dream of falling off the cliff of the dream
into abysmal reality
or wonder if i'm really someone else residing in this con/temporary
body of mine thinking of someone else's thoughts
or make love to the time staring into its clock-face wondering why it's
so bloody inscrutable
or prefer to spend days and nights in a car surrounded by six-
windowed light and darkness
or gazing into the mirror of eternity hoping to find some other faces
like mine
or suddenly forget my language in a strenuous effort to search for
meanings of a meaning
or compose poems that never begin to begin
or imagine vicariously the state of a convict hundreds of years ago
or kill my death with lots of tomorrows
or watch birds fall one by one from my lonely tree

THE POETRY LIBRARY

Spring at Kingsbury, Melbourne

on a long empty street
in the suburb
in October when rain comes and goes
in spring

in deep night when you stop saying things on the tip of your tongue
at the edge of your dream
at a moment when stillness is so loud
at the point of your pen

after all desires
on a freeway
a little after the future has just passed
when you are looking back for things

between two hemispheres
at sea
in a sky that belongs to none
in exile

with quotation marks on life
and love in subjunctive mood
with no perfect tense for memory
and emotions in parentheses

when telephones reach everywhere
when bells remain mute
when the sky is free electronic waves
when homeless

in a continent that waits for no one
in a lone island
in a moment you can't give vent to anything
among small knives of grass

in loneliness after loneliness
in misery after misery

when definition of words has been repeatedly redefined
when you know nothing more about the Chinese-Chinese difference

when life is only living
and survival is the thing
when thinking becomes thinking of home
at which you are laughing

in October when rain comes and goes
in spring
in a long empty street
in the suburb

One of Them

i know how lonely sometimes they can be
i am one of them
it's *our* secret

i know it's one of their problems
with millions of people under finger-tips
and not one to call

i know they don't want to stay on
having lost their home
they'll lose it again—it's their problem

i know how they put up with all the holidays
i am one of them
it's *our* secret

they care less and less
becoming silenter each day
looking at themselves—muttering in gibberish

i know they wouldn't say it
i am one of them
it's *our* secret

in the end even memory is useless
because of the semi-loss of one's tongue
in exchange for an artless language

i know their heart on the constant look-out
for somewhere to belong to
having nowhere to belong to

they're trees, sadly, oddly
they strike roots
without striking anything else

it's their problem
not me, not mine

After Death, After Orgasm

I

living in australia is like
living after death
you hear all the outside happenings
totally unrelated to yourself:
cars roaring on distant hills
keep roaring every night
until they are night itself
houses remain so unattached
each an island on its own
swimming in a sea of streets
books are the closest things
cheek to cheek and back outwards

showing square wooden faces
so knowing and unknown
to each other

that you feel once you hide yourself
in a word and get in there
you'll forever live
knowing and unknown

2

after China is after orgasm
you lie down on a plain as plain as Australia
your body emptied of seeds
your root washed clean of its soil
by space between
you can actually touch all the orgasms before
political scientific religious artistic metaphysical philosophical
national international sur/real intellectual surgical etc
without a second of arousal

after china
after orgasms
lie down
forever
on
australia

Alien

I stand on this land
that does not belong to me
that does not belong to them either
alone like the land itself
alone like on a planet

I often tell myself to ignore those
unwelcoming eyes
unsmiling noses
murderous cars
resentful phones
houses secretive houses

I don't care
being alien
I stand alone
impervious to questions like
when are you going home
how do you like it here
etc etc irrelevancies
can you ask the land the planet the same questions?

to swap a question
Do you know why a Chinese
deleted of any smile
stands alone behind a window
gazing into the distant future/past
ignoring things passing by

your answer is simple:
the bloody inscrutable Chinese has no friends

And Footnotes

they look so out of place anywhere
whether before Mayer in Northland on Great Ocean Road or Bondi
Beach

like obsolete quotations taken out of the context

one wonders why they are here at all
they can't even get their 'r's or 'l's right sometimes

prisoners in an alien space created by themselves

i saw the guy standing there burying his head in the paper leaden
with ancient characters absorbed in something he could
only like from a
tyranny of racist distance

patriotic traitor birds who stay where they like with no pangs of
conscience

i can't help go out to them particularly the women folk those
ethereal things who so easily change their identity from here to
eternity

dreams that do not even have a sleep to sleep in

and footnotes

Birthday For Nothing

september 29 this year only will be my 36 birthday
it's not a very significant date though
except that i will have been in australia for five months
a reason enough why i should celebrate it
although i haven't celebrated it
all my short life
either for fear of causing embarrassment to my friends who'd consider it something negligible or not worthy of too much attention if i told them or because of the fact that my family, the one that bore me and the one that married me, has clean forgotten it to the extent that never for once have i got anything from my parents or my wife in the form of a birthday card or a sumptuous dinner to say nothing of my friends for none of them knows when i was born while those who did know—those working in the PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT in charge of my personal history file wouldn't give a damn about it

or because of my own nonchalance towards other people's birthdays shown by my reluctance to inquire about it or to make a fuss for the same reason that i wouldn't embarrass others and myself by being questioned: what if they didn't turn up when i got ready? that sort of thing you know
so eventually i ended up having a solitary walk in the desolate fields the deserted hills or a remote pub in which to drink strong *baijiu* to myself or writing a bad and mad poem to record my bad and mad feelings in the end i thought to myself what's the point of celebration at all

> if one's life is destined to be lonely in which any communication is simply superficial thus impossible particularly on such occasions of celebration when drinking makes one even more drunken and forgetful and shortening years ahead make the part even longer and unmemorable
> if one's birthday is just another reminder of its nearing counterpart: deathday whose possible memorial will remain unknown forever to oneself
> if life would be happier without all those pompous formalities and superficialities and fusses
> if at least there was a friend with whom i could communicate successfully through silence and achieve mutual understanding
> well after all why should i write this rubbish to perpetuate the corridor of aching remembrance and instead live in constant oblivion of myself which could be bliss?

anyway australia isn't a reason for any celebration since i'm a stranger i'd better stay a stranger both to others and myself

Homeless Again

on the eve of Chinese New Year
i suddenly find myself stripped bare
of all traditions
by an australian moon
that, with my burning lamp

fixes my homeward pen
on a piece of blankness
my home in here

I have got nothing
everything can go for nothing at one garage sale

I have got myself
myself not a house but as homebound thing

for believing somewhere else
is not belonging anywhere else

bitter home, bitter bitter home
time sings its at last truthful song

I'm the worm secure within the cocoon of time
dreaming of outside, homeless again

with nowhere to go or return
is my sole condition of survival

like the tree having only the depth to reach
homeless again

Reading Magazines

is like window shopping without intending to buy anything
(shit you said to yourself that is not what you wanted to write at first)
reading magazines
you began again
is usually an unhappy experience for you in particular
'cause you can only speak for yourself
you scan the Table of Contents of names first
to see if by pure accident your name is there
when it is not (which is always the case)

THE POETRY LIBRARY

you start looking for interesting titles
but skip pages of fiction and poetry
funny you never could reach the end of a magazine poem
nor the beginning of a story
they look so tamed and timid
that you refuse to take notice of such domesticated things
you end up as you always do in Notes on Contributors
which seems the most interesting thing about any magazine after all
and compare ages countries of origin and academic titles
with your absences lacks or lacunea
then sigh with satisfaction
on closing off forever another damned copy of contemporary rubbish

Seeing Double

wherever you go
china follows you

like a shadow
its ancientness

recast in australia
you gaze at your own image

on the computer
its chineseness

becoming strange
like an imported antique

newly painted with foreign colour
a being of two beings

you can't help but
translate everything back and forth so many times

that it becomes unrecognizably
fascinating as a doubled tripled multipled double

Memory of a Night at Melbourne

it's a curious night
so dark and quiet
all the rooms deserted like emptied bottles of beer
once more the feeling of death comes back to me
i gaze at things they gaze back at me
i recall last night many nights before
that i have spent in this graveyard of a postmodern fantasy
flitting through page after page of the printed word
of computerized messages
trying to work out what this night means
that urges me to write about last night
nights before
lies before:

you told yourself that you did not want to go even when they
asked you
because all your life you had been trying to avoid the poets like death
they meant poverty perversity madness melancholy alcoholism
absolute stupidity
you did go though to someone who lived at upton
it was a deserted alley with solid fences made up of corrugated roof
and a safety lamp flashing on and off apparently for no purpose
there was no number not even on the curbs
for there was no curb
you said to yourself jesus that was like a poet's place
rife with rape of love murder of metaphor violence of vice tears
of hearts death of prose emotions of explosion
you simply hated them for being so wasteful
twice you went down the alleyway thinking to yourself
if there is anything you do not want to be it is a poet
then you spent the next ten minutes driving through streets of rainful
red lights greening or yellowing on the flying wings of your
windowscrapers
while checking through a melway of namesakeness
until you knocked open her house . . .
what followed is not what you wanted to describe really
it's all *déjà vu*

adding to your conviction that you'd live among drunkards than poets
particularly poets like her
who did not even cast a glance in your direction thinking maybe you
are someone from hell
but you chased her intimate dog out of door
and threw the latch to the ground
and left
after some 5 hours
of drinking in the anonymity of faces
among which hers like a butterfly of death
flitting forever through from corner of one eye
to corner of another

Death a Daily Necessity

I die at night. This is what is happening. Darkness is falling within. Birds have all gone. Nothing is left of my thoughts. Only something. Something so posthumous that I can only postpone to imagine. Something that is neither here nor there. Full of betweenness.
You damned stupid thing! How you analyse!

Dying once a night is a daily necessity. Not in bed but at desk. Burying yourself alive in words. Against the world. Taking existence in a completely forgotten form.

Dying but is joy. How can birds sing after dying each night. All I lose is myself and time.

Dying for oneself is something no one will do. But so beautiful, so terribly beautiful that only the words will know. The dead man has himself to tell the tale to.

Dying at night. At desk. At heart, where one's only friends are his words who mourn over his dead body with these:

Die each night like birds
from whom the song . . .

Word, My Last Saviour

Word, you are my last saviour
my final solution
to all human problems

you fill up the australian emptiness
and the emptiness of me
as no one else can

you come alive in my dreams
in the form of so many languages like so many bloody tongues
that I can only spell them out in English

you refuse to be translated into myself
even when you are being written
in this terrible primeval activity

like fucking images in the head
where words emerge
that I can't even see myself

Word, take me out of this space
I want to go home where everything connects
everything fits in with everything else not necessarily sexually

word, is that yourself?

Winter

rain is the only intimate voice that whispers on my corrugated roof
about something that i wanted to say in my mind
that i could only say in my electric brain
how can i survive without wine without women without flowers
without birds
is astounding to myself

i survive on the pure strength of air
heavy with memories of the past

they are not even there

i look up at the grey sky
and it looks down at me
who can remember this moment of un/communication at all

not me not me
the black magpie chuckled

In Lieu of Autobiography

In Lieu of Autobiography

i come from the yellow town on the yangtze
where the dragon is no more

my childhood was spent on the wide sandbar
that emerged deep from the yangtze in winter

gazing at big unknown white birds
with swift shadows across the shining sand

then the cultural revolution uprooted me
and planted me in the alien soil of a mountain village

what other revolutions that moved me to other places
like wuhan shanghai guangzhou montreal newyork melbourne

i do not know except that i seem to have become a free agent of
unwantedness writing forever writing poetry with two tongues

twisted together in love and hate
that can't understand each other except through lines

Names

a few years ago when i first went overseas
i had a new name on my visa
OUYANG XIAN
they did not get my family name wrong
what they did get wrong is my given name
which was changed from Yu to Xian
the latter literally means 'obvious'
obviously i am obvious
i was being 'obvious' all over the place in canada and the states
it is from then on that my name went wrong
or is it before that when i was enrolling at the uni.

the small woman at the window insisted that there was no name like mine in any decent chinese dictionaries
i argued that it was a given name given by my parents particularly my father
an intellectual
she said i was also an intellectual but nowhere did i see the like of your names a yu without a fire on its left side a yu like yours should be always accompanied by a fire on its left side you understand
we argued until she said you want to enrol or not if you do you have to add fire to yu on the left side
that's how i walked around the campus for four years with a fire on the left side of my name that's how i got such a fiery temper and so much trouble with my given name
then i became a star in 1986
when i enrolled again
this time in shanghai
my Advice for enrollment bearing the name:
Ouyang Xin which literally means Star
oh i recall now
they wrote my given name as Jade
because it is pronounced exactly the same as Jade
i complained to my father
and my mother said you could only blame him for being so intellectually conceited as to find such a difficult learned name for most people to recognize
your father protested no it's not so uncommon an ancient emperor had the same name
he is Li Yu with a fire on its left side
(you often wonder about the left side why left side not right side is it because of your mother's family name which is Zuo meaning left?)
you remember he was reciting poem after poem by Li Yu
on his sick bed from that famous line:
a riverful of spring water flows eastward
to:
wordless i walked alone up to the top of western mansion
moon like a hook
that sort of thing

then he added you could never hope to translate those poems by
him into any
other languages even the modern chinese it's hopeless attempting
these things
you find yourself doing the hopeless things
but when you came to australia
your given name acquired new significance
they pronounced it in such a way that it sounded something like
boyangs the sort of thing you wind around your legs
or a place name like the Youyangs
(that often set me wondering about my prenatal connection with
australia
or else how they know that i was coming to australia many years
later when
they started giving the place name?)
and the most funny thing is they advertised my name on EG
as Onyang Yu for the poetry reading which i quite like
because On means an elderly man while Yang sounds like young
so i am both old and young which is a good substitute for the fire
on my left side
what do you think
eh?

Interview With Yu

you said you come from china
i did
but why you wrote in english
well it's just a matter of preference i guess
what did you write poetry fiction nonfiction or other things
i wrote some poems
did you publish any
not at all
why not
well i don't know i just never sent them
but don't you know that saying: publish or perish

yes we have a similar chinese saying that rhymes well in chinese
    but not in english which goes: go published or go mouldy
why you never sent any
because well because they were not worth my while
i see you are a very proud man
i tried to be or sound at least modest
not in your poetry though
not really
what do you write about in your poetry
shit nothing but shit
that's not nice
i'm only telling you the truth for that's what a famous academic said
when he read some i sent him i mean he never told me to my face
he told someone else for example his wife or friends you know that
    kind of thing
how do you know
i think that's getting too personal
sorry can i ask why do you not write in chinese your own language
i do not own a language
i mean *your own* language
i see yes i do
but i ask why do you not write in that language
but i said that i do
well i guess what i want to know is do you publish any in that
    language as well
oh no
why not because you did not send any
oh no
why
i mean it's not my language for one thing
and for another i have no control over what they want to publish
    or not
you sound very dismal
i AM born in a dismal weather
let's ask you another question how do you like australia
not bad
can you describe in one word the strongest impression australia
    makes on you
women like men like men like animals like men and women

THE POETRY

how do you mean
that's how
well let's drop this and ask what do you think of australia's relations with asia
again in a word
if you like
asia not like australia not like asia but has to like asia that has not to like australia
that's better and your view of the chinese in australia
all traitors
really
all want to renounce their nationality and become australian citizens
good on them
can't you let me finish my decent words
sorry
all want to renounce their nationality and become australian citizens before going back to their country of origin and enjoy the best of both worlds because they are australian in china and chinese in australia
is that what you want too
who knows if i might not want to be a martian renouncing all my rights to live on this hell of a world because they don't publish my things
well well you will you will
who do you think you are some publisher of christian brotherhood
you sound so bitter
i am you know what we have a melon called literally bitter melon
and we all like its bitter taste
that's not the point
that's exactly the point i am making i mean i am a bitter person like a bitter
melon you have to like me for my bitterness
otherwise?
you like other things such as those available in the market
thanks a lot for your time and wonderful interview
did i give an interview to you
it's the other way around i gave one to Yu
to me
yes to Y U
why me

oh come on cut that out
where are you going to publish it i am serious
maybe sunday herald maybe some local newspapers i have no idea
so you are like me kind of in the process of going mouldy
i wouldn't put it that way but we'll see

three days later i rang him
my message was recorded:
did you publish the thing could you ring me at such such number

he never responded again

The Poet's Wife

once told the poet:
never write about me
or else i'll kill you

asked why
she said she just did not like to be represented
any other way than the one she lived

nor did she want to write about herself
life is to be lived not written
simple as that

she did listen to him reading some of his poems
and often wondered why he never wrote any love poems
after marriage

and asked how much would they pay him
if he got this and that published in english
and seemed happy with the amount

when they did get published
she never had time to read them and her excuse was:
i cannot read english anyway

(it's worth pointing out that he wrote the poem while picking his nose and getting rid of a lot of snotty stuff and his wife was fast asleep some two bedrooms away)

Poets

1

there was a poet when i was young
whose name was china i mean really china Zhong Hua that is china
who wrote beautiful calligraphy
whose poems of ancient lines were not really noticed
but no one liked him for his protruding teeth
and a bitter wife with a brood of kids one more skinny than the other
my mother once told my father that whenever they had rows
they would throw everything down on the ground
breaking up everything valuable
everything new
as if their anger would disappear through the hole in the ground
if they hit it hard enough with things valuable things
although they were not well off
she said this without much feeling
only a bit proud of the fact that she or my father never did the same thing
for my father was afraid of her a lot
for she had a terrible temper
she could throw tantrums like the poet throwing new things
anyway the poet lives to a prosperous age
and now has a title as Editor of a magazine called Red Wall
which is an ancient relic sort of place in my home town
and they seem to have exhausted their hot tempers
when their children grow up and when the poet
sits on committees

2

this is a guy at his mid-twenties
it was about let me see was it 1966
or the year my mother went to the third front
anyway i was probably only ten or eleven
when i met this guy
who showed me his poetry boxes
in his dark upstair room
one in particular about his dead mother or was she still alive
it is so damned hard to remember details sometimes
later he advised me to write poems
and even wrote two poems for me
which seemed dark warnings that if i did not behave well
and did not write i might end up a failure
then whatever he said to me always assumed this warning tone
or carried a sarcastic note as if i was responsible for his not being
able to publish anything did he ever tell me that
or i only guess at it now from a distance of nearly thirty years
i remember that last time when i saw him in Yellow Town
i pretended to not see him literally i gave him the go-by
resenting his acting so pompously towards me
when i was young
like a real poet

Moon over Melbourne

moon over melbourne

in a night without time
when I mourn over the loss of
an ancient Chinese poem
a thousand years ago about now

but moon over melbourne
that knows nothing of that
a young one just 200 seconds old
with a man made-light that is not only cold

you mooch over melbourne
in an air-conditioned mood
how is it you look so bloody australian
so i-wouldn't-care-less tonight

you have driven so many poets crazy in China over the centuries
Li Bai with your nostalgic light at his bedstead
Li Yu with emotions so entangled that he could hardly cut them
loose because of you
Du Fu with you surging in the mid-stream of the Yangtze
Wen Tingyun with you in a frosty cock-crowing morning
Wang Wei with you shining through the pine trees
Zhang Ji with you down at midnight full of frost and the arriving
of a passenger boat
ouyang yu with you wandering lonely across a heavenly desert

moon over melbourne you bloody australian moon
you hang on you all right you no worries mate
you make me sick home sick

you put every body to a multicultural sleep
who know not what it means by one dancing with oneself and
one's shadow under you

so contented with sharing the feeling
of planting proudly the rag of a flag
among your rocks

never mind their colonizing instinct
for they lose you as soon as they touch you
tonight you belong to me

the Chinese are so poetically cheap
remember they say thousands of years ago
in a poem: for all the breeze and moon I get I don't spend a penny

the happiest are not the expensive

you are long colonized by us, by me
caught with lyrical lines
tamed with sleeplessness
Sinicized in a single character 月

moon over melbourne
you can't stop drunken engines
the weekend rage on a.b.c.
the nameless night bird screeching grotesquely

moon over melbourne
mourn over melbourne
for the irretrievable poems lost to you
for the sleepy souls who wouldn't care less
for the nights that are so displaced here
for the dogs that bark so loyally

for me
for me
who refuse to go out again
dreading the sight of you
dreading the slightest suggestion of a memory
dreading so bloody dreading to see
the bloody bastard moon

over melbourne

A Different Moon

Shining on the dark red tears of wattles
large beyond the sparkling line of moving cars
over the gum spaced lawns

you look the same as before
except less old solitary and forlorn
colder shinier and more impersonal

is it because so little water is there over this land
that no loving ponds can hold you in their twinkling waves
no communicating eyes will reflect you in their boundless waters

the different moon
that I'd been looking for so long
will you smile a little tonight on this mechanical city?

Untitled

to be poor and content
with nothing and everything
a moon to bring back
all the poems of past
a few pieces of scrap paper
and a half broken pen
to write sth that will never come again

to be poor and content
with clothes-memories of old
patched up here and there
that evoke years untold
with a body that eats only rice and water
that knows no art-deco

to be poor and content
with fewer and fewer friends
who go elsewhere because of things
with everybody becoming rich
and can't afford to be out of it

to be poor and sage
and to know the world never belongs to you
that you can't bring anything with you
when you are ready to go
not even your memory
not even a word

to be poor and content
with rain as it comes and goes
with moon
with mooon
with moooon

Untitled

the moon is made for love
as love is made for moon
when he and she goes there
and disappears into their dreamed
reality:

the moon
made in love

A Night Walk

a moon
without reference
sparkling on high
in my myopic eyes
i recalled
this is australia
of all places
so many moons besides
in the trees
of all colours
i heard
the irrelevance of the frogs
croaking in the moat
in spring
of all seasons
and me
walking under an australian
moon
without much reference

Translating Myself

Translating Myself

translating myself into English
as if I were a language
but am I not Chinese
am I not that ancient language that
resembles myself that is myself that is the birthmark on my face
    that makes you comment to your friends without even looking
that he is Chinese or dismiss him
as a bloody Chink or Chow or burst into
Ching Chong Chinaman rhyme . . .

but translating myself is a problem
I mean how can I turn myself into another language
without surrendering myself
without betraying myself
without forgetting myself
without forgiving myself
without even losing myself in a different con/text

I mean how can English be so transparent
as not even be able to hide my china-skinned identity
I mean how can a language is so indestructible that
it remains itself while being turned into another

or is this body of mine really two bodies
one English the other Chinese
translating myself is but re/creating
myself with languages or bodies
a discourse between two knowing halves
or wholes each the interpreter of the other

but this awareness of what is being written in another language
this awareness of what is being concealed in what is being translated
given up for gained or lost or both
this helpless feeling of subjection to a bilingual
force moving in between

THE POETRY

translating myself I get paid double
by imagination and twice removed from the original
in the mind and on the paper

doing a simultaneous translation of myself
like having a simultaneous orgasm
both in your body and in your head
easy in the mirror
except for the awareness of the thing in between

but I translate myself
from Chinese into English
disappear into appearance
of another existence
looking back across the barrier of tied tongues

at the concealed image of the other body

The Romance of a Small Town

The small town has its own romance:
the girl's wanton glances
Could have seduced your wet dream to the ticket office
The fat fan in the dusky streets
Half conceals the red lips almost dripping with blood
The black umbrella is crooked in such a way
That you can hardly devour those curvacious things beneath
And listen to these anecdotes:
Wang's wife dated with a handsome young man
But wasted hours waiting in vain by the riverside
Li's husband in a dancing party
Easily took the heart of a flowery girl
Some almost unmarried girls had new married men in their arms
With each passing night—
They sound so alluring that you can hardly believe your eyes
When all you can see, in a stroll along the street,

Choked out of breath
In the smoking dust raised by the buttocks of the buses,
Is a ponderous pig wallowing in the mud around a corner
Days and nights sighing, too busy for life,

How can you believe
That the small town has such romance!

Undergraduate Life in Wuhan

How I need a woman
When the setting sun's kisses
Warm the mountain top
And birds in loving pairs creep back to nests

How I need a woman
When dusk softens and deepens
When the streetlamps elongate
Loving couples' shadows

How terribly I need her
When the cold night pierces
The thin, meagre quilt
To the heart sighing in the northerly

How madly I need her
When the long corridor echoes
With high-heels tip-toeing
And slender fingers on other men's door knocking

How I want to be rid of her
When her head nestles and nuzzles
Against my smothered heart
With endless choking kisses

Untitled

I stood silent in the darkness,
took off the mud-clogged rubbers and stole on
the edge of her bed, as the cold wind knocked on the window
whistling all over, I, leaning over her,
saw her sad face turned, covered in hand,
a broken tear squeezed
from two fingers, throwing back a faint yellow lamp
from the night-deserted path, caressingly, I reached
her icy cheeks,
the wind thumped the window for a practical joke
to see what's going on here, I embraced her,
the darkness embraced us, the heavy rain,
our hut, and my rubbers
silent askew below the bed

Untitled

A man asked me to write a poem for him
a love poem to be dedicated
to a girl he's keen on
I had no idea what to write about
and how and what the girl looked
like and if I could fall in love
with her at first sight
he said Don't bother just imagine one
I said no it's not possible I hadn't had
love for years I mean not any girls
for ages and couldn't distinguish
love from fast food readymade dresses
I mean love's so disposable these days
but you are a poet he accused me
yeah I said but not that sort of poet
keen on love which was to me chopsticks
to help me to eat cleanly in a civilized
chinese manner no not really

I Have Said It All Wrong

For lust we have come to meet
The steaming locomotive into the profound tunnel
Gone in a second: with a roar, and fire, and power
No, I've said it wrong
For love we have come

For lust we have thought much of each other
The still nights dreaming of red lips
Tomorrow would forget today like yesterday
No, I've said it wrong
For love we have come

For lust we have produced fruit
Thus the wall is erected between waves
With tongues lapping it both sides
I've said it wrong again
Not for lust, but for love

Life

Only these few *yuan* now
To buy a shorts for my boy a shirt for my wife
And rice for meal a poison coil for mosquitoes
And—yes, a cattail leaf fan and a sleeping mat
Oh, I have to sell my life to buy it back again!

Carefully, I cup the half-torn paper notes on the counter
Against a strong snatch of draught from the open door
"A small champagne and a package of *Peony*, please!"

In order not to sell my life to buy it back
(I have lived that way for 29 years)
I must drink tonight and smoke over the family dishes:

salted eggs and small roasted fish

Loneliness

I know all who don't know me
I look for the eyes that try to avoid mine

The road lamp lighting up the lane throughout the night
The wheels carrying away the loaded years

I do not want the stillness of night
that pecks my heart with a long beak

A billowy sail on the remote sea
The letter yet to be received from Mars

I trudge along the silent path
I search for, but lose, the reflected moon

A windy kiss on the window-paper
The cold stone trace never to be touched

Untitled

A man comes up to me
I know him
His name
Where he lives
A student
With sad eyes

In fact, I do not know him at all
We're strangers
Between us

A life-sized mirror

A Blind Fortune-teller Tells Me That

If you are ugly
You must have a beautiful wife or vice versa

If you have children now
Your must have turned your love elsewhere

If you were solitary in your childhood
You'll remain so until your death

If you love the moon more than the sun
It is proof enough that you are not loved

If you love thinking more than eating
You are destined to suffer for life

If you love freedom more than serfdom
You have not been used enough to the bar of prison

If you love poetry, my friend
Better like me, give up your sight and go blind

Moon

You are lonely
You wander all alone across the boundless heavenly desert, east to
west, ignored
You are lonely

You are not wanted
You pace in vain before the door, on the window, around the bed,
all asleep now
You are not wanted

You are insomniac
You think through the night in dream, with unclosing eye that gazes upon the world
You are insomniac

You are not understood
Described by some as a white rabbit under the laurel tree, by some as lifeless and cold
You are not understood

You are mine
You shed liquid brilliance on me and find yourself in my eyes
You are mine

The Moon

like the sleepless eyes of someone inflicted with pulmonary tuberculosis
or crickets bursting forth their first voices from dewed tips of night grass
or a couple of figures that came together suddenly and separated as suddenly under the flowers
or the quietness on the smooth surface of a gigantic rock that looms over an abyss
or the pitch black teeth of the sawing pines that cut open the sky
or the tiny bottles that contain grapes of cancer deep from my father's bowls in pink liquid that the doctor held to my nose
or a blob of thick green snivel of someone else's that I found by chance sticking to my trouser-legs
or rusty flowers of the Chinese ilex that fall floating about in the shape of calligraphy
or a big white sheet being blown in the clear breeze written with no characters
or wine glasses drained to their last dregs beside several drunkards sleeping in disorder
or yellow urine bringing fresh roses into bloom in the still dark valleys

or mouth organ flowing on the waves of light with the rhythm
of the lungs
or the pen that composes music having a bout of asthma and
shitting melodies far into the night

well, whatever it is the moon is the moon
so distant so cold that it induces so many morbid memories

Untitled

I hate the spring
That builds up a green tree-wall before the eye
A cold screen
That prevents our eyes from touching
I stand by the window here
She by the window there
Looking longingly for—this heartless spring-screen!
Biting cold wind I more desire
To catch her glances like quick minnows
That escape the green mesh of trees

Life Full of Darkness

The first darkness
warm, bloody
a pregnant envelope
sealing myself
the unwritten letter
within

After a long pen
to fill in the blank page
a slow recovery from loss

I find my way into
the fe-mail-box

Another darkness
as treacherous, cold, empty
as the other is not

My letter, a still-born dream
that escapes
into still another darkness

For opening and the opener

But never again
is the same, oh
the same ultimate darkness

That fleshes me in oneness

Untitled

so close to me the night she
A white embrace of wind half in my arms
Slightly shivered in my hovering hand
From the dark soil of a dreamed land
Ballooned the parachutes of the mushrooming
Roses black beneath ringed with the palest
Green brushing against the hardness of me
Against a hard-working dream
An all-out push of instincts sleeping into
Wakefulness of pre-nights when
Lines flesh themselves into the night long pen
On the sheet of my seedy bed creaking with
Agony with smouldering passion

Until pounding out in the plunge towards
A white-black pool of warm limp stick
Forever pushing against the behind of the impossible
Night body

Untitled

The whole half-transparent night
You lay open in a pool of fragrance
To me

While I, a lowering cloud
That gathers all its pearls of shower
Inch by sliding inch, come

And then, I am a bridge
Motionless arching across you

the flowing river
The moaning waves

Strangling

T.V. persecutes me far into the night
Forcing me and my cigarettes to pace up and down in the moon
shade by the wall

To avoid the city's noose and pit of burying one alive
I hide myself in a small town, unexpectedly girdled by the
philistines

Unable to bear the foul smell of chicken's cage and the thick
turbulence of human desires
My heart runs in Olympic Games at 100 m/s

THE POETRY LIBRARY

Green peaks are crashed against my bosom
Gashing out greener blood while the sky leans at my ears, giving out
blue cries

I chase my imaginations, drifting with the rolling yellow waves
Moonlight freezes me into a perpetually moving ice debris

On the deserted wasteland let me embrace you from the grave:
Hope,
Although you have been strangled a thousand times

Untitled

My baby was crawling in bed
I had put a picture a few inches before him

Clumsily, kicking his tiny legs
he reached for the edge of the picture

and would have got it had I not moved it further away
he had to crawl forward to it, bawling

and was beside himself with joy when he grabbed it in hand
at which I burst into laughing—

all of a sudden his tiny clumsy body turned into mine
trudging through an uninhabited barren marshland

lured by a beautiful picture in the distance
forging ahead tirelessly

while my standing self at bedside turned into Him
who was looking down through thick clouds with piercing eyes

at my body distorted beyond recognition merely in search of the thing
crying for loss and laughing for gain

I burst into laughing—for my son had once again grabbed it in hand

Untitled

I despise myself as a poet
poor, not born with a fine common practical
sense, a large heart to contain all the ingredients
of the world, a terrible loneliness
to get along

I hate myself for a poet
good for nothing, quick to change, easy
to despair, weak against emotions,
and women, too ugly and disabled
for life, too imaginative

I disqualify myself as a poet
without proper command of poetics, or
noble language, the needed passion,
a moral respect for the famous, and,
to crown all, a human love of myself

Untitled Because That's The Way It Is

Untitled Because That's The Way It Is

yes i remember you telling me how you did not belong in china
having learned a language that you did not even know why you had
    chosen to learn but had mastered the way no one else could
    have done
the desire for power over words of whatever languages
but then you said it's not all that simple
you said it's something akin to tortures of pleasure you inflicted
    upon yourself bored stiff with being so whole that you'd like
    experiment with cutting yourself into pieces with tongues
or you'd say it's like trying to create a world in which to hide yourself
an english wor(l)d that's neither english nor chinese
full of your own secret images no known words could penetrate
or you look within yourself across the boundary that divides you into
two uncommunicative countries actually you look from above that
    borderland
of deeply d(m)isplaced landscapes into a sky coming into its own

now that you are t/here
you are telling me again that you realize for the first and last time
that you do not belong anywhere because of that big linguistic scar
like a genetic racial facial feature
that carves you into two aliens in one
the one that divides and rules but doesn't belong

come on i say
none of your tricks playing with life's little ironies
they all like that as if it were good fashion

untitled for no reason at all

what is left out of writing
is found in life

like i am now
writing myself in

leaving my life out
picking a dirty nose or farting or shitting or pissing or yelling at
beloved ones
or hating the loving

what is left out
wants to get in

Once More Untitled for Another Australian Autumn

there is something to be said about the australian autumn
that it changes my colour on such a monumental scale
that my teeth turn golden in an effort to compare all the previous
autumns
my hair sheds its sinuous strands of thoughts
with the cricket-fall of nights
my eyes with the penetrating power of a melancholy prick
searches patiently like the patient for the last leaf
that drips with poetry
my limbs all idle with no love of mad exercise aimed at fat
are peeling like gum trees
cracking like crackers
on the eve of a chinese luna(r)tic year

and i see through the computerized forest of words
myself wedged so alien in this unconnected season
in the shape of turning leaves

Untitled For Myself

i'm a poem
you can tell by the number of lines over my papery face

i'm being written
with two hands and one machine of a post-modernist age

i give nothing away
for i have nothing to say

i'm self-conscious
of being watched as i'm being written

although i won't ever know those
who'll read me

i'm a poem
that lives by being written

Untitled

two hands tied to writing
he lost the pleasure of masturbating himself
he wondered how
he could bring himself to a climax
in the text
with both hands bound with keying
it's so hard
literally so hard
not physically
he had to use his left hand to massage it
while eyeing a threesome
on a glossy page
but as soon as he lifted his left hand to type some aroused imaginings
it went limp

so he ended up writing with a pen
as hard as the cock
that kept growing in his left hand
until it cried
and all his pages were flooded
with energy

THE POETRY LIBRARY

Untitled

computer is such an imperfect thing
that writing a poem
means
writing ten

Untitled

someday i said to myself
i'm going to kill someone
i said that to my son
i said that to my wife
i said that to a lot of people in secret
i said that to myself
until one day when i took this poem in hand
and squeezed it so hard
that it spurted blood
of hottest metaphors

untitled

suddenly he said he *discovered* me
declaring to the world:
hey look at his guy here
he *is* a genius
he *exists*
for so long without being known
unfair
most unfair
he shook his academic head full of footnotes and endnotes and a
stuffy nose

i look at this professor of prophesy
my closest neighbour
over a long distance of years
from now on
and

smile

Untitled

the established poet was quick with his presents of poetry
without even me asking him
he said:

would you like a copy of my most recent poems?
i said please
he said
here you are
i said thanks
and brought it back
and book-shelved it

the moral of this is
if there is any moral at all
that the moral of this is
if there is any moral at all

Title Forthcoming

on a bright winter morning like this
when shadows of sunny trees are long across the room
shivering from time to time

when t.v. is masked under red drapery
and the yellow chair sits contemplatively before the uncovered table
and the Macintosh is deafeningly noisy

i am writing this poem
without even knowing what i want to write about
without even knowing what title is forthcoming

seeds of ideas for poems
have been rolled into irregular paper balls
after being stretched to imagination

except one which has these chinese characters on it:

the bird of time
dead in my hand

and some other seeds
of a poet with protruding teeth
of a poet who never even publishes

failures they all are failures

well that looks like a good title
which is:

Failures they Are All Failures

Titles For a Poem

sometimes it is 'Australia, the Boring Country'
when you feel no matter how hard you try
you just can't make things happen
like making love to a woman with an anti-contraceptive ring
placed permanantly inside
while wishing that somehow she would conceive your seeds of
discontent

sometimes it is 'Living on the Margins'
when history stops dead short
and chinese scattered like unrelated footnotes
to the four corners of the paper
earth by a wrong computer that does strange things
to you who are outside all relations

at other times it is 'Sleeping with Men'
that reminds you of the old days when you spent long nights
talking to your friends body to body in the same quilt
joking about women thinking about future married w(l)ife
feeling by accident the dry crisp stain of something like semen
but without daring to raise the probing question
perfectly understanding why

titles floated about in the air
like mosquitoes at night
so that you were stung into dreaming of things like
'October, the Season of Rain'
when the windows of your car
were loud with shapely round things
that returned after each stroke of the scraper

or of things like 'Tonight, I Have Nowhere to Go, Confined in the Prison of My Car, Pushed onto the Freeway of Postmodernity by My Reluctant Self'
which does not need anything else to be attached to it
'cause I can't think of anything else to say after such a long tedious title

or things like 'After a Long, Long Night of Poetry'
about the horrible experience of living a poet's life
by pretending shamming faking making believe taking advantage of
a real poet by trying to commit an undying suicide of a poetical magnitude
by acting up all sorts of poetical licences and pretences

or things like 'A Bad, Mad, Sad Dad'
about yourself to show that you are nothing
but a bad mad sad dad to your son and all that crap

or things like 'What's the Point, Mate, of Living Like That at All'
or 'Come on, Let's Make Love Again since There's Nothing Else
We Can Do about Life'
or 'Hey, Let's Kill that Guy for He Starts Writing Poetry Again'
or 'Confucius Unbound'
or 'Last Days of a Chinese Lunatic in a Melbourne Mental'
or 'A Wandering Soul in Search of an Unfound Beauty'
or simply 'Untitled for All Times'
unthinkingly

out of these titles how many are you going to turn into poems
you often wonder to yourself

Making Love Making Poetry

love is coming
when poetry is coming

one in tentative strides
and the other on mental tiptoes

you take things off
you put things in

your mind gone on a different track
assisted by ears and a close-eyed world

the crab-apples dripping heavily onto the senseless ground
with every gust of wind of desire

the cockatoos once more swooping down
to snatch the ripe half-yellow half-red apricots

that hung densely on the hair of two heads
that merge into one with physical concentration

the minute you seize a pen
as you reluctantly withdraw from the battleground of wrestling

your poetry is gone
with your ears

Feet

all they've learnt for the last five thousand years
is love their women's feet
and put these in a tiny tiny pair of shoes
so that they become so weightless that they can dance on the
golden lotus
leaves like the dewy stuff that rolls about in a quicksilver way

emperors loved that
didn't you know that one emperor in the tang dynasty
asked one of his imperial concubines to do a dancing on a lotus leaf
so light did he feel himself that he fucked her then and there on
the leaf
while all the others were cowering under the enormous canopy
that shivered in quicksilvery pleasure

there are other stories
men of letters used to have drinking parties with courtesans of
the town
usually with the tiniest feet
they would take off the cloth shoe that had flowers sewn on it
as pointed as the girls' nipples
and smell it inside out and caress it like you do to a health ball
the shoe went the round
and served the purpose of a cup for them to drink with
i wonder who was taking care of the shoeless feet meanwhile
that must have been hanging there quite lonesome
more importantly when they actually started doing that sort of thing
what they did with those feet

took them in hand and held them in position before you
entered in between
the energy the nourishment the vitality that should have been in
the feet
must have been all pressed further back into that particular place
that all men loved

those were the thoughts that flashed through my mind when i was
composing this feet poem
they reminded me of an incident not so long ago
when i had a photo of a group of chinese prostitutes in the first
decade of
this century
with such tiny feet
that i did not know what i was doing
but simply took out my thing and came instantly
shooting desires of a collective unconscious all over the photo
smearing the feet oh what fuckable feet

even today love for us does not start from the eyes
but from feet look at those lascivious chinaman
watching feet big feet moving around
in high heels always high heels
their version of *our* lotus

but feet are strange things
whence they are allowed out about
they have fewer places to play
constricted they help you and me
end up inevitably in the one and same place

oh feet

The Love-Maker's Soliloquy

what have you been doing all those years
when scholars were completing their thesis of thesis
when businessmen were busy making money out of everything in
the world
when graveyards are full and schools run dry
when the sky is no longer there

the love-maker
were you still seeing a hole in every female face
were you without realizing what you were doing
picking up your balls-pen and writing onto everything in a timeless
space
filled with tissues wrapped up quilts stilletos of all colours of the
rainbow
t.v. screens ibm screens macintosh screens
screens of their eye balls

let me ask you the love-maker
what was the markings you made on the calendar
were they numbers of comings
or signs of personal exteritoriality

never mind you say she'll be right
i marked them up for the days in a receding memory
of unmade love
and dreamed ways

Written by a Chinese Prostitute

we really have nothing left after the revolutions
except our bodies
revolutions they brought in from the west
that abounded in people like marx engels hegel schopenhauer
hitler mussolini jung freud and a lot more abnormal and insane
maniacs

revolutions that first brought our emperors to an early death
then ushered in communism the ghost that had been wandering
in europe
and now found a new home in china which had lost its old home

i was homeless ever since i was born
woman was my name and chinese
what was more alluring more degrading more sexy
than a young chinese woman armed
with a 5000-year training in cunning and technique to please
taoist philosophy of love
buddhist religion of absence of love pain
confucian ideology of loving love to serve one's own love

i don't have anywhere else to go
my destiny lies west
it could mean death as our idiom goes
it could mean sex and the freedom
it offers
my body is the universal language that requires no learning
my body is the world map that covers all the territories of desires
my body is a climate that predicts the end of china
my body is an undercurrent that runs deep within every secret heart
they do not know that my very original ancestor was two
they were two entirely different races
they fought and fornicated
fought and fornicated until they bred hundreds of millions of people
they knew no purity
at least not like you WESTERNERS who so cherish their racial purity
look at my body
isn't it beautiful and sexy
fuckable to every pore of the skin!
the reason is not too deep to find
in my crotch:
i am the mixture of hundreds of different racial fucks
i am she who is returning home in the west
to retrieve in a sea of white semen the original vitality
that kept our ancestors alive
however wild ugly uncivilized it is

i am used to their way of fucking as part of Physical Education
pretty soon i am sure they will train phd students in this
but my body remains still in its contemplation of a universe
without purity
despite the annoying thrusting movements from all directions
like stings from mosquitoes or flies
my mind is in my body
in my pussy
that thinks the sexiest thoughts
and takes in the essence of humanity without distinction of nationality
race colour size and other discriminating qualities

i am a republic that is subject to no monarchy
i am my national identity
i serve the country well
for i call my next customer in
and give him an ageless body of blue sky and water
and live a life that's only meant for the free

City Impressions

On the MET

i was going to the city by tram from bundoora
on a grey gusty morning

and i changed my seat a few times until i sat down by the window
and faced the direction the tram was going

(was it yesterday i can't even remember all the details
it seemed like something that happened so many years ago)

then t/his face hit me with such an impact that
i simply couldn't resist looking at him again and again:

one eye lower than the other
both bulging

looking at you as if
looking at someone else

his hands couldn't help themselves
but had to pat himself on the arm or the shoulder

in accompaniment to his thoughtful smile
and ponderous nods

i wondered at god's justice in creation
i guessed at the motives in nature

i thought him a possible problem
until i caught myself in his lop-sided eyes:

eyes if not slit almond shaped
teeth too protruding as if having eaten too much too hard

head if x-rayed
must be full of shit

jesus what i thought to myself then
to be a poet and to write poetry

on a melbourne tram
face to face with a self-same problem

jesus
jesus

i saw them go
and said to myself i wanted to write a poem about them or myself

so that's what you read about
in this bloody poem

about myself wanting to write a poem on a grey winter morning
when i saw this problematic person or myself in his eyes

At Syndal

i had my first glance at this fur-wrapped doll
when i was lost as to which side of the track led to the city
and asked an old man about it
but even while i was doing that
i knew for certain that if she was not anyone else she must be chinese
although the sun-glasses covered her from brow to nose
and she was definitely sexy
with her fashionable boots as thick as a bucket or brick
the sort that is called Cylindrical Heel
and god her perfume! it was like a locomotive puffing perfume at me
in passing
i was in a swoon from a distance of tyranny
somehow i managed to get in the same compartment with her
she in a corner and i faced her regarding her in the half mirror of the
car window
lovely
she took out a pen and a pad and began writing!
well that's something new
she mildly reminded me of Tonia in the Russian novel

How the Steel Was Tempered?
but she looked morose
just had bad sex with her lover perhaps?
or had a sleepless night thinking of days in china doing nothing
but dreaming of a marvellous melbourne
nothing like this having to bear with the secret glances of a
country yokel
from china a poor student probably without love for all his life
she must be registering some figures of the day's business
or taking down the details about her rich australian lover's givings
her forehead so high so creamy coloured
she had probably been born white
when she rose to go she had the air of a high society model
i saw the leopard spots on her furred back
the yellowish fringes sweeping her thick boots
i could have fucked her then and there
but it was Malvern
she on the platform walking away
and i in the car gazing at her bum

i did
at night
when i was having sex with her
my semen came at a time when the furred boots
returned with all their puffing perfume
to my orgasmic brain

Down Smith Street

that morning
my tram was going down Smith Street
littered all over with litters
a grey or bright thursday morning?
can't remember
i avoided the eyes of the fat lady sitting right in front of me
who avoided mine

THE POETRY LIBRARY

each knowing the other was watching
out the window at littered Smith Street
i was going down
in a tram full of aversive passengers
all interested in watching a streetful of litters
from last night's drinking and debauchery
even the guy i recognized to be a lawyer friend of my friend
whom i met at a party with his manly wife
i winked at him raised my index finger over my head at him
formed my mouth in the shape of a shout at him
in the window that reflected his face which i knew from optical
    experience
would surely see mine
he never acknowledged
well dressed in his tie and grey suit
he seemed absorbed in reading his daily news
at every bus stop
i saw a rubbish bin overspilled with yesterday's memories
of promiscuity
down the Smith Street littered with litters
i thought of china and liked it for that
and wondered to myself
what would happen when the rubbish was all cleared
would anybody know that there was me
riding a tram of aversion
trying to call an ignoring acquaintance to attention
down the Smith Street littered with litters?

Conversations With Computer

I

that's all right mate
i see my hands punching you thoughtfully
making mistakes here and there
i'm not waiting for anyone

only expecting something to happen
something is happening somewhere
someone must be dying at this moment
or being born
totally unrelated to myself
but i'm thinking of them or trying to
your noise nearly drove me mad
but i remain calm
i don't know who i am
what i am
what i want to do
how to do it if i do know
who cares
i'm in australia
who cares
you're a nice bloke though
you print everything i type into you
while remaining noisily silent
i can't bring myself to love you
but i have to use you
i have to speak to you compulsively
expecting someone to listen to it
in a far away place
maybe a lot of people
a poetry reading even
where my words are happening
but who cares
they are all drinking
and laughing and
eating meat
and making love
and a lot of other things
poetry does not matter
conversation does
you tell me to go on with my nonsense
all right mate
two years ago
you wouldn't have thought me capable of such a feat
being in china

being in a place i didn't belong to
well you are right
i did not really belong anywhere didn't i
and i have never wanted to belong anywhere
so you said i was sort of flying
or to be more exactly
i was sort of hanging in the air
floating
between heaven and earth
or is it between china and australia
who are they anyway
aren't they just two meaningless names
places which make you feel different
while you are really not
because
talking to you
i feel the night outside
never ever seeking to befriend me in the least
scratching my roof of head with branches of paranoia
and the lamp
of the slenderest body
in a standing position
that forever waits to serve
i know i am shit
i write shit
i can't be any good
having lost all my educated faith in anything good
including god
this my continuum of living
i write to sustain my sense of being
one with you
my sole companion at night
writing my life into you
becoming you
sowing my white seeds on your field of screen
even when i have nothing to say
my hands continue mechanically to grope
they want to live
that way

2

again, left without anyone to talk to
i come to you
with feeling fingers
what's the point of sitting before me without being able to come up
with anything to say
you wonder
what's the point of type/writing at all
when there's no one left in the world to read what you intend to write
except some faraway editors who don't really care
except me who registers everything without a mind of its own
i'm very vulnerable you know
to any virus
of love and hatred
of any non-emotions as well
i'm easily lost
you'd better save me onto a hard dick
i mean a hard disk
but i don't have one
i let it be
gone with the sudden disappearance of electricity
the failure of the ubiquitous modern god

can you give me a bit of peace
i want to have a rest
from australians
who are so faraway
living their death-like life?

3

sometimes i feel i could go on forever like this talking to you without feeling tired only feeling something akin to sadness emptiness self-pity deathliness of emotions all those things happening simultaneously without caring what i say what i do for i in fact do not say a thing only my hands my fingers are doing the typing instead of my tongue mouth lips it's an age of substitution things have lost their original meaning their original function take my mouth it does not utter a

single word for days when it does it's a string of hot abuse or a chain of compliments so worn down with daily use and my hands tied up to a machine as a slave to serve its master the brain physical and electric without knowing whatever else they are good for

it's something lamentable when everything dies god love literature poetry art except human beings the everlasting human beings and the machine

thus here face to face you and me the last remnants of the earth talking to each other in a one-dimensional way you faithfully recording everything my fingers feed you and i whiling away my time filling all your 40 megabites with my un/dying messages meant for the everlasting human beings

After Reading 'Invasion Literature'

I am dreaming of one day invading Australia
wholeheartedly
with whatever numbers of people they can
think of
and however new weaponry they can imagine
and whatever ferocity virulence violence
cruelty devilry evil evil evil—

simply to make an entry in the general index
of a New Chinese History under 'Chinese
invasion of Australia'

before I evacuate my imagination
of a land originally not called Australia

China

they know nothing about you
they write about you talk about you
shoot about you shit about you dream about nightmare about you
love you hate you eat you kill you
the more they do the less they know

what informed ignorance

their philosophers are nuts they don't know a
word of your tongue their writers are nuts they
don't know how you shit their artists are nuts
they don't even see where your imagination comes from

nuts nuts nuts—this western collective stupidity

and yet you are a deep deep pond
so deep they can only glance at the surface
and see themselves but the courageous take a
plunge in order to know more
dead wrong they won't know anything
they end up being one of yourselves
before they utterly forget their own language

never mind, China, they won't ever know you

Westernized

I've never thought of myself as Chinese:

among Chinese I think I'm the most unchinese
until I bump into them the blue-brown-hazel-chocolate-eyed long-
    yellow-smelly-haired
then only then I realized
how smoothly chinese I have been

to the root
of my teeth
and tongue

the root of
where my pen/is

Revolution For Australia

who says australia doesn't want a revolution?
i say it does it does
i am the person to start that revolution
i will first issue an order to stop all academic
seminars with their complacent foucaults derridas bhabhas kristeva said
how i hate to see those priggish academics
read their tissues they can produce one copy a day
like shit according to some theories they themselves hardly understand but can handle in such a delicate way as to make you feel inferior for being unable to understand them

i will throw an atomic bomb to destroy the unbreakable millage of australian suburbia to make millions homeless again so that they can be reunited in their misery not in some god-forsaken churches engaged in some kowtowing or kneeling communion business

i will stop all magazines newspapers and tvs from circulation and unemploy poets so that they'll become bards roaming from street to street pennyless shitless

i will cancel the word and the fame attached to it and kill all those who think they can gain eternity by hurrying their lives into papery words or wordy papers

i will cancel thinking the most deadly thing to the human being and
    return us all to a cosmic unity in which there is absolutely no
    difference of races languages colours . . .

sometimes my hatred is such that it runs
    as wide as the sky and
    as dark as the night
that envelopes everything in the world

Untitled

when he went back to China
I asked him why
he said:

i just do not like living under totalitarianism
neither do I like being accepted here as a PR
a permanent recumbency
a prescribed redundency
a pissed-off resident
think of what others will think of you:
a philistine chinese opportunist who never has enough of his dollar-
    dreams
who will have best of both worlds by denouncing his own mother and
father, hiding under the protection of his unwilling adopted parents
there is nothing heroic in this lazy australian way of life which will
never be part of you
east is not for me and west is even less
haven't you found out that west has become so eternal that no death
will inhabit it?
that in striving for happiness everyone becomes so boring and bored
that they can't even buy back their exciting unhappiness, a luxury?
well, here, to china I will go
because I know I will never be anything else but chinese
even after ten mi(s)xed/marriages and miscarriages
and I will choose death in a land that runs some big rivers with no
possibility of return

THE POETRY

so, back to china
a place that is western in its truest sense

Australia, Let Me Teach You How To Be Old

There are too many ways of learning to be old
let me tell you this first:
when I'm talking to your girl friend or your wife
don't bloody assume that I, being a lascivious Chinese, have in mind a night full of fucking
You Aussie Kid, you don't even know a Chinese idea of beauty is not rough hairy skin plus smelly flesh and holes

Another thing I have to warn you
don not get jealous
learn to be patient with your years
you can't even drive a car out of Australia
but you can wait for centuries to be joined to other continents
you are too young, my baby

But not energetic, definitely not
because you are too drunk
I see enormous bags of beer
bottles on Tuesday mornings
that contain gallons of emptiness
Be old or you'll drink to your stupid early death, my kid

And this madness to prove yourself
Be sensible, you can't glorify what is not a glorious beginning
learn to be like us who are resigned to everything: invasion, massacre, conquest, suppression, oppression, depression, compression, etc, and eventually the conquered becoming the conqueror and the conqueror becoming conquered
are you puzzled, little kid from Manly?
Then learn to be old and wise

Even in racism, don't just call names or yell abuse or use fists
you forget your English gentlemanly manners too easily
or perhaps even those manners were not at all gentlemenly for a start?
Say something unforgettable that even the butt of ridicule can laugh
without restraint, that is, say something sophisticated artfully, not just
assume an air of hollow superiority
don't you even know the saying that goes: in purified water there is
    no fish?

If not, come to me and learn to be old

Most of all, you are too young not to love things steely: cars, iron
buttons, zips, or knives or you love non-human beings: birds, cats,
snakes, snails, everything but humanity
I know eventually your life will be like this: you and your bloody dogs
and bloody cars: the holy trinity: when you die your car will be sold
second hand and your dog—
he may whimper at your graveside or go find another master
learn to be old and have some human friends plus your animals
live some more
be older
give less concern to being Australians
but to being a human being

Untitled

To me West has always stood for
all that is best:
freedom
gold
realization of one's best orgasmic dreams

until now when I realize with
        a shudder of the heart
how Eastern it is
in its cruel indifference to people like us

how slow and lazy
and conservative to the degree that
they think they are so good
that they don't need any change
how stupid because they are so computer-brained
how mass-like in their individualized individuality

A Form To Declare Before Departure From Australia

Where from?
PR China.

Where to?
PR China.

Why?
No money. No love.

Country of first preference?
America.

Country of second preference?
Anywhere in the West.

Why Australia?
By accident.

Why not Australia?
Why not not?

Untitled

Summer night. The sky laden with great star-fruits
Throwing down black shadows everywhere
As lights paint the wind on the brown legs
The wind blows the lights into a pond of ripples

The sleepy man tired of his distant desires
Down there, the wild barking of a dog
tonight, my heart laden with great star-fruits
Still, heavy, and grown

Untitled For Always

i got the rejection today
the guy is resoundingly serious:

I DON'T AGREE WITH YOUR ASSERTION ABOUT THE
WORTH OF YOUR POETRY
NOR DO I AGREE WITH YOUR OPINION OF AUSTRALIAN
POETRY

shit
how can he be so serious
about something so accidentally called poetry
that consists only of broken lines
that i only wrote auto-erotically?
jesus he must have been thinking himself a genius or something
for writing pastry?

but getting the rejection is really something
a promiscous discourse
more like ejaculation
than ejection
by somebody
you only know the name of

who is supposed to be a god sitting there acting the judge
giving you the judgement day
the terminator that tries to destroy me

the liquid man

see?

untitled for now

everything so computerized
that each time i exit
i save my life unto my backup disk
becoming duplicated

i wonder if there is a scanner
that can return me to screen
from my written copy
when my disk happened to be virus-ridden or simply damaged

i wonder if i can die many times to taste the life of death
by simply keeping a backup disk

untitled for a number of times already

i sold a poem today
at the junction of plenty road and dunn street
where they used to sell the age in the mornings to passing cars stopped
before the red light
or waited to collect coins to fill in barrels of charity
or wiped a few coins out of the unconcerned window screens
but i sold a poem today
believe it or not

to an australian
a bloody australian
who looked like a greek
spoke like an asian
smelt like a middle eastern
behaved like an adolescent
average man
who said:

pom? what ya mean, pom?

i shouted in his grey hair of y/ears:
i'm going broke and mad today
this is all i've got
a poem of pants
not punts
nor puns
that i had picked up in a garage sale
for a couple of bucks
that i had worn through thick and thin
in a lot of fucks
i'll just give it to you
for a cent

(here it is
i have the cent
he's got the po(e)m
i don't know what to do with it
nor does he)

you uanderstand?

Untitled

Poets
I'm sick of your thick bush (bull shit) of images
tonight

let me be cured by a simple letter from her
telling me
she almost burst into tears in the airport
when she
shy of the jealous eyes, tried to break free from my public embrace

of my loveless homesickness

Democracy

in china the mere mention of the word
would bring tears to the young
who know about the may fourth april fifth june fourth and all that
a lot have died for it
others seeing that it is no use
have escaped to the origin of the place
thus beginning their wrong kind of life
imagining that they have also become children
and exporters of democracy
little knowing that
this democracy is a sort of disease
that one has to pass onto others to make oneself strong

I Thought That They Were Different

that they never hugged children
that they only hugged women
that they never talked behind the back
that they only spoke the truth
that they were direct proud and excitable
that they were not collective
that they did not respect parents and presidents
that they did not respect titles

that they did not need friends nor relatives
that they terribly loved cleanness
that they were a lonely lot
that they only wanted left alone
that they were probably not afraid of losing face
that they were only afraid of losing money
that they drank too much
that they cared too little about other people's business
except their own such as their money and fame

until i came here and saw
how much they were like us in living a normal life
except perhaps a bit too thin faced
a bit too civilized to bear comments from us

Her Story

i hate all poets
she said

they were all so self-centred so paranoid so self-indulgent
that i'd wish to kill them all given the chance

or else they'd end up killing you in one of their crazy moments
like what you did to me just now

striking hate and terror into me
then making love to me

while i'm sure you must be composing one of your everlasting poems
in your head

poets should all die and give peace to the world
like what your friend from china said in his letter

but they are like grass
you heard yourself saying

mowed down weekly by the clean surburban people
and keep growing from death

then i'd use poison knife fire and chemicals
while saying she fell once more into his arms

At 38

i am good for nothing
an island that can't anchor in a star-filled sky

an ocean that goes dry and dry and dry
with the death of each sur/passing season

i don't ever dream
i sleep

soundly
in a germ free bed

i sometimes do a bit of calculation
when i reach beyond the end of eternity

i wonder what tens of billions of dead people
in the past 10,000 years must have thought about life

i wonder if i am anything particular
simply because i think i am too many things at once

or have wanted to be
but now it's high summer

and the car i am driving is a hot stove
that goes through a dream-like landscape of faster existence

at 38
i am still good

for nothing

Talking With The Writer

it's kind of funny you know
when i came back on the plane
i felt as if i was still with you
although we had had so much time talking to each other
mostly you about yourself
because you had so much to talk about
your y/ears were invincible
impervious to my intimacies
of an unknown life
thus i was left with the only choice of talking to myself as if to you
your shadow in the dark recesses of the mind
i noticed that you were very clean a clean man in his early sixties
girls liked to have photos taken with you
something i hated and resented
i came to understand that fame was a thing that could be stolen
easily by camera
you never asked anything about me
a sign that showed your egocentrism or nonchlance?
but you had to listen to me when i started talking about the
difficulty with
old writers in producing anything original anything even new
the early death of creativity
you kept silent and then went to bed unusually early
i knew i hurt you
so what
i'd never become famous as you
and never wanted to
didn't you realize the price you had to pay for such bloody fame
you were dragged aroud from place to place just to see things
like a tourist
you couldn't help criticize others more and praise yourself less
you probably did not like the way i did to you by not joining the
photograph crowd
you probably wondered why you should have come to such a
degree that you
had to bear with the people you would have ignored in sheer contempt
otherwise

such was fame that one was made less famable by a much-worn name
don't you know that no one can speak for anyone nowadays
don't you know that there is nothing in the centre at all
don't you know that the only thing that matters is someone you
have at your
side even if it is only a dog or a cat or a rat artificial
someone that you'll know that is you that is part of you
as you are him
the world oh the world
what does it matter
so long as you can find someone you can talk to

you'll go in a few days
and you took a cold farewell from me
which hurt me very much
your eyes seemed to be saying that nothing did matter
i was only one of those millions of nonentities you met in the world
who came to you of their own accord milling around you like ants
so they should leave you alone of their own free accord
you were probably right
but did you know that i did not take people like you very seriously
either
because there were so many like you who'd fade into history
who were already become history even when they were alive
what's the point of living like a piece of history
well let me finish my talking here because the winter is on
and i have to hurry back to my den of dis/content
and prepare for a weeping winter without a cause

byeeeeeee

Being Difficult

that critic whose name i won't tell you until a little while later
says that he does not like this poem or that for the simple reason
that they are simple because he says that he likes things difficult

but let me tell you a story of being difficult about a poet
who is shitting one day or sleeping one night
who tries a bit of auto-writing stuff or shitting stuff
like dada you know or surrealist whatever even a little bit
of translation here and there ancient and modern collaging
you know very fashionable so that what comes out is
not a bit unlike a prose poetry drama essay music pop song in style
and derrida foucault kristeva greer barthes marx freud jung
nietzsche all put together so that nobody understands
and now the critic plunges into action rubbing his hands
and smiling to himself gosh that is the thing So difficult! like myself
i must do a good job about this
and prove to the world how clever i am
then he starts making cards compiling bibliography taking notes
reading reviews phoning people and writing fragments
dissecting the poem and himself so that they merge into
each other
but what is his name you ask
never mind his name for you can easily pick one up anywhere
nowadays
if a car ran into a telephone post and that post must fall on one

then you say i wish the post fell on one
see if it is not too difficult

At The Anti-Racism Conference

1

someone an expert he must be was talking about the gypsies
in a room that was filled to the back wall
with people of different colours sizes hair eyes clothes and feet
who obviously understood english
judging by the meticulously compiled lists of speakers topics and
room numbers

i stopped before the door
awed by the presence of so many anti-racist people today
who were so absorbed by the speechy speaker
that none of them acknowledged
my presence not even the chairwoman
(who is not a door-keeper anyway)
so i had to brave the searing stares and irritated glances
and found me a place to sit in the furthest corner
at the foot of an indian or a fijian
who didn't acknowledge my presence either like the white
chairwoman

the speaker danced through his talk about the gypsies
he knew so much that people became interested
and asked a lot of questions
none of them noticing me sitting in the furthest corner on the
ground
it was all paperwork anyway
for i doubted whether he had ever talked with a gypsy at all
but he was more important for he could write about them

2

during the break i met a guy of my own race
who claimed to be an expert on racism against chinese in the states
with a number of books to his credit
he seemed nice and immediately produced his scented business card
which showed him to be a doctor something

not as advertized on the brochure a mister
but he didn't seem to mind
he said he had just come back from a conference in china on
economics
i wonder what that got to do with racism
then he told me that he came from hong kong originally
he then wondered if i could go to his talk the next day
i said yes and told him that my talk was in the afternoon
he didn't seem to be interested at all

later i saw him busy talking with other people
and never showed any sign of recognition of me

funny wasn't he
i thought to myself

3

it was my turn now to speak
i delivered my talk in a rapid vollet of words
that aimed at finishing the whole thing within the limit of 30 minutes
the standard conference time
the packed audience had gone
the remaining was fewer than nine
with more women than men
anyway it was suitable
for my talk was about women chinese women
i saw in a glance the irishman who talked about the gypsies
was there
who raised a question
not to me
but to a genuine australian who was the chair
and had talked about the aboriginals before me
and the question was asked in conjunction with my talk
i mean it was meant for two birds with one stone
but i noticed that i was not addressed
and sensed the implication of something like this:
i am not asking questions to you
i can but i don't want to

so all your effort will go to nothing
anyway the guy never did ask me
nor did he ever afterwards even look at me
perhaps it was because of the fact that i referred to the australian
abhorrence of the irish-chinese marriage which offended his irish
pride
i wouldn't care less
and then there was this old wrinkled unhappy lady of forties
who approached me with interest and a question: would i like
to provide her
with a copy
i suggested she go to the conference service to get a copy from there
she left but soon revenged by giving the promised interview to the
other two speakers
who talked about racism of other countries instead of australia
and after that she went past me triumphantly
without showing the least recognition

she had the power
i thought to myself
good on her

4

that was day one of the three-day conference
and the next two days found myself wandering about kingscross
and visiting whores and other dregs of the society
such as chinese

them/us

they live across the street/we live here
they mow lawns regularly/we eat rice
they say G'Die/we say *nihao*
they watch behind closed curtains/we comment behind doors
they don't phone us/we haven't their numbers
they won't lend anything/we sometimes do borrow
they go to the parties/we go to the park
they drink beer/we drink milk
they hold babies on one side of the body/we hold them in the middle
they take cold showers in fever/we take herbalist pills
they do mind formalities/as we do
they do not smile to strangers/we do not smile to friends
they do seem not to care about money/as we do seem to
they do seem not to care about face/as we do seem to

they are us who were not/we are them who were not

Printed in the United Kingdom
by Lightning Source UK Ltd.
106381UKS00001B/247-285

Moon Over Melbourne is a revised edition of the author's first English-language collection, published in Australia in 1995.

Born in China, Ouyang Yu completed an MA in English and Australian Literature in Shanghai and worked as an interpreter, translator and lecturer in China, and later went to Australia to complete a PhD at La Trobe University, Melbourne. He writes in both English and Chinese. Best known for his poetry, he has also written fiction and criticism in both languages, and has translated over a dozen Australian works into Chinese. He also edits *Otherland*, a bilingual journal of Chinese-Australian writing.

"Ouyang Yu is a controversial figure within Australian literature, sometimes characterised as 'the angry Chinese poet.' His work captures the frustrations . . . of the migrant experience and hits out at the indifference and hostility with which Australia has greeted recent waves of Asian immigration. His raw, uncompromising style . . . challenges literary as well as social establishments at the same time as it engages in courageous acts of introspection and self-criticism."

— Wenche Ommundsen

"Ouyang's poetic voice is more direct, more aggressive, more complex in its ambivalence and more confident in its acute sense of exile than anything I've read before by an Australian poet. No Australian who reads his work will remai untroubled by it."

— Alex Mille

". . . his springy, bouncy, and wonderfully moonstruck poems could have bee written while he was trying out a new trampoline. I don't know how many som ersaults he can do, but it's clear that in the best of his poems he transforms th world he writes about and helps us to see it anew."

— Gary Catalano

"Despite (or is it because of) writing in another language, discovering Ouyang Yu's poetry is like unearthing a diamond from the pile of ordinary manuscripts to cross my desk."

— John Irving

Front cover photograph by the author.
Rear cover photo of the author at Byron Bay, by Alex Miller.

www.shearsman.com

ISBN 0-907562-85-X
90000
9 780907 562856