

Height of a Dream

You can't remember the dream But its height
Leaves the flesh in your flesh trembling
Birds silenced by impending danger
Hammered as if by moonlight
Garden numbly sniffing itself
Dazed silver fragments scattering the ground
You can't remember But the one in the dream
Raised on a rib-bone into the sky
Still walks about like music exhausted from swaying

At times a dream is longer than life
At times just a precipice Making you another age
Old age Darkness' age—
If darkness must receive you

Dead Poet's City

It is not only those who once lived Who should die
All the names buried in silence
Put signatures to silence A city dismantled by themselves
An empty street decked out as a funeral procession
Moonlight hard like iron
Long forgotten outside the window Little drums beat
Words deleted by you in life return to delete you

Ruthlessly deleted Savagely deleted
World after deletion Specimens of faces more close and clear
Eyes after deletion Vision polishing surrounding glass
Carving a delicate paper bird
Like the one you saw smashed
Crumpled Discarded On rotting manuscripts in the corner
Your final death is familiar
An old house waiting to shift out dead old skeletons

Written by Yang Lian in Auckland
Translated by Mabel Lee

Yang Lian (b.1955), now writing in Auckland, has published many volumes of poetry in China and the West and in the underground

press in China. His work was banned in China in 1989, after he set up the New Zealand and Chinese Democracy Relief Association and the China Survivors Festival of the Arts. He is currently poet-in-residence, School of Asian Studies, University of Sydney.

Dr Mabel Lee, Head of the School of Asian Studies, University of Sydney, has published two volumes of translations of Yang Lian's poetry. Dr Lee is Foundation President of the Chinese Studies Association of Australia.

The Logician

Why would you mention
now
that day when the heart
will splinter, and
fragment,
and all life's sorrows
will be
erased;
when whatever attained
will be
lost, undone;
and whatever withheld
will be
granted.
This day, in fact,
marks the first day
of love;
yearned for yet
feared
in duet.
How many times have we
seen this day
ravished,
redeemed from its
looters,
redressed.
So
why mention that day
when the heart will

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be broken in pieces;
and life's sorrows
will all
be
revoked.

Faiz Ahmed Faiz
Translated by Estelle Dryland

*The Punjabi-born Urdu poet Faiz Ahmed Faiz (1911–1984) is now becoming widely recognized in the West. A self-termed 'humanistic socialist', he protested against all forms of injustice, including religious and political injustice in Pakistan. He was imprisoned for conspiracy for several years. This poem, 'Hath Ki Lakiren Na'hin Mittin (Tum Apni Kar'ni Kar Guz'ro)' / 'Whatever is Ordained is Ordained' is from the collection *Sham-i-Shaih'r Ya'ran (The Evening of the Poets)*, 1978.*

Estelle Dryland is a Sydney graduate who has written on Faiz and published a number of translations. Her book on his life and work is to be published by Vanguard Books, Lahore.

A Corner of the Garden

Breakfast time.
Three crimson, shimmering,
Cosmos flowers & some
Tiny ears of corn just come up,
How faint and fresh autumn is
in this corner of the garden.

Ah, the postman's here.

Kitahara Hakashū (1885–1942)
Translated by Leith Morton

Leith Morton is Professor of Japanese in the University of Newcastle, NSW.