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Snow-Covered Sun

Bits of broken glass on snowy ground,
frozen red stones,
on a white night the flowers that bloom indoors—
all these are branches in your hand.

Naked, she faces your yard from the valley,
arms soft as the river,
breasts, full buttocks, sweet belly, V stroke
of dark hair—
all these are branches in your hand.

The snow-covered sun
hangs on the trees
like a five-year old's watercolor.

In your yard she dances,
collarbones shining,
ankles shimmering like the moon,
scented sex between lips and tongue—
all these are branches in your hand.

The snow-covered sun
burns like a red stone,
like a glass children gaze through
at the clouds.
Swaying petals,  
white night on snowy ground  
winter stiff as plastic sandals—  
all these are branches in your hand.

The snow-covered sun  
sheds its cold light  
on her bare feet.
Missing the Encounter

You passed by me along the riverbank.
I said “Traveler, please look back!”

You looked back, and passed by me along the riverbank.

Again you passed by me along the riverbank.
I said “Traveler, please look back!”

You looked back, and passed by me along the riverbank.
Mayfly’s Journal

Poetry aches and freezes.
Melancholy narrator below the waterline,
foam’s masterpiece,

I turn my back on the memories,
the dangerous fish in the distance,

days in dark seclusion,
oblivious to the grinding of fish teeth.

They can’t hear the bad news
about my vanished poet-brothers.

Water, gigantic
curves, dizzying.

Who will notice the body’s double trembling,
breathing like a thread, like an ant.

Finally, born in shame, the first pair of wings.
Another pair!

Lightly I shake my wings
and take off,

writing my name on the surface of the water,
tremendous dream under a lotus leaf’s shadow.

I pass over the land
and the market of cattails
Liu Manliu

like an insect kindergarten
or the grand ball of the white lotus.

I accept the beautiful scenes along the shore
as a consolation.

First trip without the help of a machine
into a multiple world.

The thread on my tail
is there to maintain balance.

In my own sky
I rocket into tragedy.

A crash site
teaches the newcomers.

To begin like an apprentice,
to summarize like an expert.

Unconsciously I'm approaching eternity,
nearing multiplicity.

Oh humans, why are you so greedy?
Give me a day.

One day is enough.
Give me one day of eternity.

No need to get excited about beginning or end:
Measure does not exist.

Death is only the ritual
of leaving your life.

At twilight we fly in groups,
facing sunset together.
Circles inside circles,
the first and last days of a lunar month merely secondary.

A soul that is multiple enough
can hold anything.

No need to point at the sky and say
"This is a second"
or "a billion light years":
The explosion is ongoing,

the cosmos in a moment,
all of us existing in this one fantastic shot, dancing.

Flying, too, is a performance,
but without an audience.

It is the ultimate affirmation,
proof that we deserve to be noticed.

To fly is to embrace this attitude,
to embrace the land and its inhabitants.

The sea. Pity for a grain of salt.
Our flight is without limits.

We live our lives as you take vacations—
in one day we mate, lay eggs, and die.
Tibet

When I saw him he was already gone. Right here.
From here to there, strands of long hair
flutter against the wind. Streamers of sutra.
A beam of light flares, then dies.

Some snow is melting.
Knees hurt?
I'd rather fall out between hadas.
Or tell stories with empty hands.
See how darkness fills their eyes, melts in the mouth.
Spirit above matter.
Lotus and nectar on the pilgrim road.
One step and you're no longer where you were.
Mountain, water. Yak butter and zanba for my food.
I want to raise my tent
in a perfect place,
but the rope is broken.

The snow is melting slowly, but there's no need
to race against the day.
No one values the treasure,
which once stolen is too late to regret.
The incense is still burning.
What should those who lost their gods do? Guess!
Sing and dance to your heart's satisfaction.
We die of small wounds and are resurrected.
A spider is spinning its web to the sound of sutra.
Simple landscape in the thin air.
A horse takes you to the destination.  
Horses have run away from the grasslands,  
half of them already gone.  
Not theirs but the riders’ hearts are empty.  
People circle and circle.

When I turn my head suddenly, he is not there.  
Where is the road?  
I get rich from selling beads.  
I brought someone into his garden  
and found a brass spoon in the village.  
A blessing disguised or a curse disguised?  
I drift along with my days,  
the sun too big, too black.  
In my sleep, people arrive.  
Some will follow others till death;  
they leave with the rich. Buckets of tears pour down.  
When you disappear,  
don’t forget to take your shoes and your hat.

Words that float in the air cast blue shadows.  
You look great in Tibetan clothes, like a banner.  
The high land barley is no good for brewing beer anymore,  
but we all smack our lips to praise its taste.  
Om Mani Padme Hum.  
If the place is fun, we’ll settle down  
and drink any tea that tastes sweet.

Damn! Why are you pregnant again?  
The leaves are falling. So what’s up?  
Grab an instrument and let her try it.  
His deformed face is smeared with tears.  
“Wake up, wake up,” says the baby.  
I know him.
The day he was born, a huge mushroom popped up outside the door.
On his left palm, the image of an eye.
Thinking she could no longer stay in this world, his mother left.

Snow, why are you melting so slowly?
Waiting for good weather, they finally lost patience.
Only I remain, like this, neither here nor there.
The swamp west of Lhasa used to be a killing ground, ghastly at night.
I'm in love with the only language I know.
But where are my beads?

The man with the deformed head is still weeping, but no one minds.
In this world, we can't retrieve even a single hair.
So we dream.
The Train Crossed the Yellow River

When the train crossed the Yellow River
I was pissing in the bathroom.
I knew I shouldn’t—
I should be sitting at the window
or standing at the door,
left hand on hip,
right hand shading my brow,
looking far into the distance
like a great man—
at least like a poet—
pondering the river
or some moment in history.
Everyone else was doing it.
I alone stayed in the bathroom
for ages.
Right now time belonged to me.
I had waited a day and a night:
A stream of piss
and the Yellow River flowed on
In Praise of Work

I praise work
I praise the worker
The muscles bulge in his arms
He swings a hammer to break coal
He bends.
A few sparks escape his rough hands
and shoot into the furnace
The fire brightens his face
his anvil and his workshop
To cast steel chains
this is how
the work begins

He doesn’t need them
He doesn’t think of their future
Just work a process of smelting and casting
Hands and tools take over
throwing steel bars into the furnace
to become something else
The abandoned plowshares and hammers
emerge from the burning coal as new chains
He is a surgeon
extracting chains from scrap iron
turning it into something useful
His movements and expressions suggest nothing
He is a system of
muscles controlled by the work
The motion of the tools moves his body
the only meaning work