

DOROTHY CHAN
ABEL HAN
CHRIS SONG

14 MAY

**Y O U N G
H O N G K O N G**

7:00PM



**ABEL SONG HAN
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C H A R E A D I N G S E R I E S

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DOROTHY CHAN

VII. Grandfather's Oranges

Grandfather pays his respects with oranges:
if an orange once ruled the world,
oranges now rule the home shrine,
the stacking of fresh bought every week.

Honoring our ancestors with incense,
Grandfather takes out a golden snake sculpture
from his case of gold and glassware,
tells me it looks too scary, too fierce—
I stare, smell the incense across the room.

He has a Da Vinci *The Last Supper*
hidden away. He knows I love real art.
This isn't Chinatown from the movies,
but this is beauty, the oranges all neat,
Florida's Best still stuck on them.

VIII. Grandmother's Porridge

Hong Kong's best is in front of me: *yum cha*,
Dim Sum Happy Hour until 10 AM
at my grandparents' signature restaurant
across the street from their apartment.

I help Grandma wash our teacups and chopsticks
in hot tea. She's picky with her porridge,
says there's not enough bones in the pork.
Grandpa orders my favorite, chicken feet:
feet never smelled so sweet, mixed with spices,
their alluring burgundy. Spit out the bones.

We eat with our eyes, spin the Lazy Susan.
This isn't Hong Kong from the movies.
I eat lychee gelatin and egg tarts,
tell my cousins about American life.

XIV. Hong Kong Seafood Restaurant

Holiday to holiday, family friends
from my dad's Macau boarding school childhood
eat dinner with us in Las Vegas.

At Hong Kong Seafood Restaurant, re-runs
of old Chinese shows: my mom's teenage years,
followed by coffee commercials: the day's
only started across the ocean.

We spin our holiday lazy Susan,
watching the Madonna of Asia sing
on TV—she's known for her Nike brow.

My dad tells the waiter it's my birthday
just so I can eat the lotus buns—
America's best take on Hong Kong:
sculpted peaches, pasty leaves atop.

XIX. The Thai Palace

I meet my family at the Thai Palace:
Coke-floats and lemon-ice on the table.
This outdoor restaurant is a football field
of millions of benches and millions of people
crammed into tight spaces, filling the paces
of communal-Asian-style-mealtime.

It's voted "Most Authentic"—so loud that
I can't even hear my grandfather speak.
He hands me a crab claw cut-open,
showing love. We eat our pineapple rice and
Tom Yum so hot you know it's real
because it burns a Thai soccer boy's tongue.

Grandfather points to the spring rolls, tells me
to eat more. I know that I'm his American potato.

ABEL HAN

打開

一定有甚麼東西
 就藏在那東西裏
 打一排櫃子 打一把鎖
 打一件鎖匙 再打份工
 櫃子裏藏滿東西 一定
 有甚麼東西 就藏在那東西裏
 排一條隊排到前方 再
 從河的一岸游向另一岸
 水裏都是氣味 我們張大眼睛細聽
 一些東西碎了
 但不複雜 聲不成話

就像一個閒人 每天報到
 坐著看書 飲水 再去廁所
 跑過去 行過來 雙手濕濕
 他坐著看 望那本書
 書攤開著 據說寫滿東西
 像是一直看
 就能打開甚麼

Open Up

There must be one thing
 Hidden inside the thing
 Make a row of cabinets. To make a lock
 Make a copy of the key. And make a living
 The cabinet is full of things. There must be
 One thing, hidden inside the thing
 Queue up to move forward, and
 Swim from one land to another
 The water is suffused with smells
 Open eyes wide to listen carefully
 Things fall apart; the centre could behold
 With sounds. Without speech

As if an idler on duty
 Sitting for reading
 Drinking water. Flushing the toilet
 Running back and forth, with a pair of wet hands
 He sits to read, gazing at the book
 The book is fully written. It was said
 As if we keep looking
 We will open up the thing

From *Fannou Poem*

不過他還是要走的。不過他也會再來。每次他來，她都覺得一匹白馬在這個逼仄的房間出現了，昂首闊步，白髮柔順，把整個房間都照亮了……可她有時候又自卑起來，覺得這裡對於阿林來說，不過就是個賓館。可是，桃源不就是個賓館嗎？有哪個大城市不是賓館？在前臺交了錢，拿到房卡和逗留期限，住兩三天或兩三年，睡單人床或大床房。搭電梯上下樓，房與房隔音極好，近鄰遠親俱無聯繫。電話去服務台總是無人，電視里總在放本地新聞，望向街頭總是落雨漫天，打開水龍頭，是有氯味和土味的渾濁河水。聽不懂旁人說話交談，旁人也無興聽你胡言亂語。於是，拉上窗簾，蓋上被子，和愛人擁吻，不管室內有多麼污糟髒亂，不管室外有多少流言蜚語。活在賓館，就是這樣。

But he needs to leave. Yet he always comes back. He appears like a white horse in this subdivided room, with flashing eyes, with floating hair. Even the room's lighter with him here.....Sometimes she feels like this flat to him is only a hotel room. Isn't the whole city a hotel? Which metropolis is not a hotel? Check in at the counter and pay the bill. Get the room card and duration of stay. Stay two days or years, with a queen size or a single room. Use the lift to go down or up. Lost connections with neighbours and relatives. No one hears you you are moaning. No one answers you when you are calling. The television only features local news. You barely go out -- It begins to rain whenever you look out of the window. Turning on the tap, a river with chlorine and earthy smell oozes out. You don't understand the coded language other people speak, they don't want to listen to yours either. Living in the hotel is like this: draw the curtain, cover the quilt, cuddle with the lover, don't care how dirty the room is, nor how noisy outside is.

From "The Statues", *INK Literary Monthly*

Archetypes

The young monk was waiting for a story
When thunder came over the summer
When green things became grey
Until one evening, the old monk told him a story, a sad story:
There is a temple on the mountain
There are two monks in the temple
The old one says, I am telling a story, a sad story
A person is walking on the road
With another one. Or without.
They fall in love. Or break up.
Or they search for an end
Until they find there is no end
Anyway, once you see a person walking on the road
You know a sad story is beginning
The young monk was always waiting for stories
In the evening, when he was copying the sutra
In the morning, when he was sweeping leaves
Until one day, a young woman came walking from the road
He saw a story coming out
And going away.
Thousands of years fell
On his eyes. From then on
There was a temple on the mountain;
There were two old monks in the temple

From *Edge: HKBU Creative Journal*

每天起床，他都在找，找一個地方寫作，然後，找一些東西寫。

地方很多，但人也多。去茶餐廳？哪敢久坐。連餐都要在外面餐牌看好，坐下即點，但點單阿姐還是不笑，讓人疑心如何乖巧，才能做一個新世紀好人。去快餐店？也坐不長。一落樓梯，頓入冰窖，坐一會就要去廁所，不撒尿，但洗手，抱緊幹風機溫暖自己，這是屬於夏天的火爐。落座上，拿起筆，又有興高采烈的音樂又進了耳朵，一首再一首，自己都心潮澎湃，下一秒就唱起來。咖啡店好，學生哥都知道，一排排攤開他們的作業，桌桌白色，花一餐飯錢買一杯咖啡，越向裏走，心越心涼。間或有返工男女快步走入，口講電話，鮮衣怒馬，掃一眼這些坐下來的人，像一種俯視，白日流流，這些人真是閒。

還是去圖書館吧。去社區圖書館，要穿過街市，穿過那些買菜的人和被賣的豬，還有氣味。到達大廈，上六層再下一層，圖書館像一本書，被藏在街市和體育館的中間。先找些書，再坐下來，假裝自己真是一個讀者，是圖書館的目標群體。右邊阿叔翻閱武俠小說，左邊師奶研究糖醋排骨，他被限在座位中間，艱難地找出稿紙和筆，打開來，打開和左右不同的世界。

問題是：寫點什麼呢？

Every day he searches. Search for somewhere to write, and, find something to write.

He has many places to go, alongside a lot of people. Go to a tea restaurant? He doesn't dare to stay. He already orders whenever he sits down, but the waitress still keeps a sour face, which makes him doubt, how obedient one needs to be a contemporary good man. Grab some fast food? He couldn't stay either. The underground place is an ice house, urging him to the toilet. He doesn't pee. He washes hands. He holds the hand dryer tightly, that is the heater in summer. Whereas he sits rightly and holds a pen, the elated music would enter the ears, song after song, makes him sing after. Coffee shops would be alright -- but students know that too, spreading out their assignments, masking the tables into white. He pays a meal's price for a cup of coffee, working into the shop and walking into despair. When the commuters quickly step in, talking in a phone language, dressing in a fine garment, their glance is like an overlook: so early in the morning, so much free time to be wasted.

The library then. To go to the public library, he needs to pass through a wet market, through vendors who sell and pigs to be sold. When he arrives the entrance with an odour, go up to the sixth floor first and down one level. The library is like a book on the shelf, in between of the market and the stadium. Grab some books first and then sit down -- he needs to pretend he's not a writer but a reader, a target user of the library. An uncle is reading a martial arts novel at the right, and a housewife is researching on sweet-and-sour pork ribs at the left. He's trapped in the narrow seat, drawing out the pen and paper with difficulty. Unfold the paper, and unfold another world.

The question is: to write what?

From *INK Literary Monthly*

CHRIS SONG

菠蘿包

宋子江

條條框框
 關不住一肚虛火
 油紙有限地接納碎屑
 在俄羅斯茶室
 能否尋到名字的根源？
 空泛的內軟裡
 有時是甜酥的叉燒
 有時是結實的牛油
 包餡鹹甜，內情冷暖
 經歷包碟上的世故
 卻忘記了模糊的出身
 總有欣賞你的人
 願意回到過去
 勾混一碗金黃
 在你身上塗抹
 讓你重新發酵濃縮
 再與你在溫暖裡
 共謀一塊橙皮

Pineapple Buns

(Translated by Anakin, Cici)

Frames, packs and boxes
 Cannot hold burning fire within;
 Oil-paper takes some of little pieces.
 In a Russian teahouse, would the origin
 Of its name be found?
 Inside the hollow softness
 Sometimes roasted pork, sweet and crisp;
 Sometimes butter, firm and solid.
 The stuffing is sweet or salt,
 Inside it may be cold or hot.
 It has experienced to be in a pack,
 But forgotten its birth, vague in the past.
 People who love you at last
 Are willing to go back;
 Mix a bowl of golden yellow
 And smear on your body,
 To ferment and condense again;
 And with you, in the warmth,
 Together enjoy a piece of orange peel.

餵龍

宋子江

人們用敬意把牠餵養
 卻從未見其真容
 在沒有皇帝的日子裡
 都以為自己就是牠的傳人

或許，不存在
 才更引人入勝
 就像一個孤單的途人
 在恍惚中尋思白雲

有時牠和雷電糾纏
 一起擁抱烏雲
 如扭曲的黑心棉

有時牠任由雷電
 劈下瞬間的輪廓
 彷彿於此卸下存在的擔子

一聲晴天悶雷
 足以使一個孤單的途人
 停下腳步，在恍惚中
 餵龍

Dragon

(Translated by Anakin)

Bred in respect and awe,
 But its face, they never saw.
 With no emperors in those days,
 “We are its heir,” so everyone says.

Perhaps it is more enchanting
 Without an appearance;
 Like a wanderer questing
 White clouds alone in trance.

At times it tangles with thunderbolts,
 Together embracing dark clouds
 Like twisted black cotton wads.

At times it strikes down thunderbolts
 In a moment, the contour revealed
 Is escaping from existing loads.

A dull thunder on a sunny day
 Is powerful enough to halt
 A lonely wanderer in trance
 And become dragon's prey.

無心酒神

在葡萄園滴酒不沾嗎
那麼就鋸斷這棵枯樹
向心點算同心的年輪
如同書寫離心的音信

你撥開沙土把我埋葬
澆下百年的酒水栽種
枯樹結出鬱結的心臟
你又再把它寸寸挖空

神也無心，酒也無神
你點燃枯枝燒出微薰
還給我一顆沉香的心
殘朽樹樁都重獲新生

就從我髮絲扯出塵世
血葡萄串串鬱結牽纏
就把我身心劈成隔世
錯種的哀情片片飛散

你在枯枝間採摘狂歡
玩弄擒縱也與我無關
無謂一次次勉強假扮
我也會痛，即使你無心

To the Zither

by Chris Song

They don't let you swipe your card. They don't let you play.
They force you to read the MTR by-laws. You shall play
smart. Don't do it. Say boo. Don't fall into their trap.

Because they'll set you up again and measure
your vertical height. Once you speak,
you'll be blacklisted. Once, unfortunately

you're in the train, you shall take cover, hide among
travel grey backpacks, grey good traders' luggage,
learn the art of infernal affairs. Once caught

don't panicked. Don't burn the zither. Be pliable.
Expediently. Burn the policy address to make breakfast;
Late for school, say there was signal failure.

In the class, you shall be patient, do the math
study music theory. One day you shall play
lethal notes into the ear of power and make it bleed

fare adjustment formulaically.



致古箏

他們不許你入閘，不許你彈奏
逼你讀港鐵條例。你要醒目
不要入閘，也不要當他唱歌。因為

他們會再耍詭計，測量你立起的
高度。一旦發出反對的聲音
就會被列入黑名單。一旦不幸

入閘，你要學會隱藏自己
學會無間道，躲在背包客背後
水貨客身邊。被發現也不要驚慌

不要做焚琴的浪子，要懂得變通。
微明時舉火記得找施政報告
返學遲到記得說信號故障

在課堂上要有耐心，學習數學
和樂理，將來把致命的音樂
彈入權力的耳朵，讓他流出

可加可減的血。

