

Mai Cheng

麦城

Also by Mai Cheng

麦城诗集

(Selected Verse of Mai Cheng)

词悬浮

(Verbal Mag-Lev)

MAI CHENG

麦城诗选

Selected Poems

Translated by Denis Mair

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麦城诗选

Mai Cheng: Selected Poems

在一次写作里碰上晓渡和芒克的身影

一封远方来信
这样写道
他在未来
订了三种世外桃源生活
约我
晓渡、芒克
乘坐陕北民歌
尽快赶到那里去
朦胧诗负责接站

如此美好的约定
被晚餐的筷子
从词语里夹了出来
轻轻地
搁在未来前一天夜里的盘子上
我拿起电话
拨通了跟他俩有关的
两种不同的写作策略
他俩彼此的友情刚刚升位

晓渡说
他只能在未来呆一个上午
他欠生活里最主要的一个夜晚
还没还上
而芒克却是另一种答复
谁也不欠我
我只欠有深度的生活
和北京口音
没说出来的快乐

2004年3月20日

**IN THE ACT OF WRITING, I MEET WITH THE
SILHOUETTES OF TANG XIAODU AND MANG KE**

His letter from far away
Had this to say
He had placed an order in the future
For three kinds of life in Shangri-la
He invited me
With Xiaodu and Mang Ke
To hurry there as soon as possible
Riding on a folk song from North Shanxi
Misty Poetry would meet us at the station

Such a lovely invitation
Was plucked from an exchange of words
By the chopsticks of our dinner
And lightly placed on our evening plates
One day before the future
I picked up a telephone
Dialed two strategies of writing
That pertain to the two of them
Whose friendship has recently been promoted

Tang Xiaodu said
He can only spend one morning in the future
He owes life its most important evening
It is time to pay up
But Mang Ke has a different answer
Nobody owes me
I owe something to a life of depth
And to the happiness a Beijing accent
Has not yet uttered

2004/3/20

信

——致晓渡

这封信一打开
晓渡便从纸上
把芒克还给他的思考
递给我
最后，他写道
兄弟，我在下游等你
我朝向墙上的地图
查找他寄过来的那个下游

一面图纸里升起来的船帆
挡住了江南后面的绿
长江的潮水顺着纸上河道
涌向了我
我赶紧借来抽水机
向外排着倒灌在写作里的积水
这时，晓渡打来电话
问我离下游还有多远
我气喘吁吁地回答
下游？是不是我说的那个上游

2004年3月21日

LETTER

—for Xiaodu

No sooner had I opened the letter
Than from the paper's surface Tang Xiaodu
Handed me the deep thinking
Mang Ke had restored to him
At the letter's end he wrote
Brother, I will wait for you downstream
I turned to the map on the wall
Sought the downstream he was sending me

A sail unfurled on a sheet of drawing paper
Blocks a green view of river country
The Yangzi tidewaters surge toward me
Along a riverbed on paper
I quickly borrow a pump to expel
The reflux of excess water in my writing
At this moment, Xiaodu rings me up
Asks how long before I reach downstream
In panting breaths I answer
Downstream? Is that what I mean by *upstream*?

2004/3/21

撤出来的词

——为国坤兄思古追旧而作

接着，你向后撤去
撤到一面旧旧的铜镜里
谁的结局跟上了你的撤退
再撤，就到阿房宫啦
可宫里的生活
早已被电影借到了宫外

铜镜里的唐三彩
帮你联系上了你早期的视野
你拿武家的策略
用长途电话折旧着我们和古人的分离
你说，把光芒拿过来
我就能让你看到故乡

故乡？何为故乡
一只快要死去的鸟
让你的表达飞了起来
故乡，就是祖先
反扣在你命运里的一张底牌
故乡：在别处

天安大厦的电梯
把你古色古香的经历
带到了历史的上方
油漆替墙壁
对你的表情
一遍一遍地做着减法

你终于挥舞起
武家的最后一种刀法
砍着从铜镜里
窜出来的历史火苗
火，越烧越大
刀，越舞越美

2004年1月30日

WORDS OF WITHDRAWAL

—for Guokun, and his fascination with antiquity

And so you turn away, withdraw
Pulling back to an old mirror of bronze
Where someone's downfall catches up to you
Pull back further, to E-Fang Palace
But daily life in the palace
Was borrowed for movies outside its walls

The mirror showed Tang figurines in three-color glaze
They helped you connect with your early vision
You used military tactics, made long-distance calls
To depreciate our separation from the ancients
You said, bring on the flashes of brilliance
I will let you see our native ground

Native ground? What would that be?
A bird at the point of dying
Enables your flights of expression
Native ground, which is ancestry
Is a face-down card, buttoned inside your fate
Native ground—is somewhere else

The elevator in the Skyscraper of Heavenly Peace
Lifts your beautifully weathered experience
Into the upper stories of history
Again and again the paint,
In place of the wall, performs subtraction
On your smile or frown

In the end you set dancing
The final moves of a warrior's sword
Slashing at history's tongues of flame
That dart out from a mirror of bronze
The fire burns hotter every moment
Your swordsmanship more beautiful

2004/1/30

祭祀

——献给我的外公和外婆

外公，在坟墓里
校对着碑文
我在坟的外头
点人间的香火

瘦瘦的身躯
瘦瘦的面容
瘦瘦的行程
瘦瘦的影子

从里到外，外公
被瘦归拢在一起
瘦，是他
唯一能留下来的东西

外公的最后一个梦想
准备回传给迷恋故乡的一个背影
却被生死离别
铲出了界外

我拧开酒瓶塞
贴着外公的瘦
对着他内心的空瓶
倒，我的孤独

2004年2月27日

OFFERING TO THE DEAD

—*for my maternal grandparents*

My grandfather, inside his grave
Proofreads his burial inscription
While I, outside the grave
Light the incense of the living

Gaunt physique
Gaunt features
Gaunt journey
Gaunt shadow

From inside out, gauntness
Made up my grandfather's very being
Thinness
Was his sole legacy

Grandfather's last dream was supposed to pass on
To a lone shape enamored of our native ground
But the gulf between dead and living
Shoveled it out of the picture

I uncork a wine bottle
Press myself against Grandfather's thinness
Into the empty bottle of his heart
Pouring, my solitude

2004/2/27