

## “Mount Peng”

It is still a long way to Mount Peng  
 Dreams walk on the ground, beneath clusters of windows  
 they flee

Huge volumes of refugees surge onto Mount Peng. In late autumn  
 blue-colored birds are hunted  
 mounted on sheet iron  
 on a section of trunk taken from a sapling  
 a—its two young footprint  
 have left imprints on his chest—and  
 a length of flame as swift as a foal

Blue-colored bird, its feathers are the first to die  
 and then its two eyes and then its speech

From a chilly ferry, Mount Peng  
 is not far  
 People intent on their journeys take over every  
 winter nest. So goes  
 the dream. Dreaming that the blue-colored bird  
 spreads its wings and flies away from the woods and even looks back  
 and speaks to the dream

Ling Yu  
 Translated by Andrea Lingenfelter

## Lily Magnolia

*my darling noontide, the magnolia drops her gaze, serenely dreaming  
 she dreams of me standing on tip-toe before her like a phantom  
 she makes out the can of water I hold, poison to all but her  
 and in her face I cannot find the slightest shred of fear  
 while she now senses how I loathe myself  
 so deeply loathe this blood, these nerves, these pores, the  
 look of my ears, my constricted heart; one moment she understands that  
 I'm plainly only a man; soon after she reminds herself that  
 I've lounged beside windows staring at others, or switched on lights  
 and passed through doors to penetrate still deeper places  
 and so she sheds pretending flowers, or makes the best of a  
 gently gusting breeze in clear skies, or a peal of thunder, to dance me  
 from her skin, from her uneasy heart*

Zhang Zao  
 Translated by Simon Patton

## Tightwire

This man knows. He gropes for titles.  
 There is need for naming fish and bread  
 When multiplied upon a mountain.

Such a dark swirl the sky is, red-banded,  
 Like the crested bird of castanets.  
 Or a señorita's skirt. We are under the folds,  
 Looking up at thin lines of titillation.

This man knows, and groping, proceeds  
 To place one disdainful fool's foot  
 Before the other. He repeats the process.

The dark bowl that is his universe  
 Assumes the properties of porcelain.  
 He walks on delicately and there is need  
 For breath, for breathlessness.

This man knows and stops, leg crossing knee.  
 In the very middle, where till now hanging  
 Under pubis of air, he stays.

Hanging. Poised on poisoned fence, essence  
 Dripping on his head, centered. Were the dancer  
 To do a cartwheel his figure would show  
 In the revealed arc as the hanged man. This man knows.

He stays there. He falls. And in his falling  
 He knows. He knows he is falling.  
 He is falling. He has fallen.

The cards were stacked to begin with.  
 How many times he has fallen. How many times  
 He has known the virtues of falling. How many  
 Mountains and dancers he has loved while falling.

Alfred A. Yuson

## Yuyuan

—According to an ancient legend, Yuyuan, or the Abyss of Yu, was where the sun went when it set.

Went to Yuyuan to visit the imprisoned sun  
 Those wings that chafed at their lot were its  
 crime

Its wings furl up a corner of the darkness, bleeding  
 Sharp arrowheads fastened tightly to its vital parts  
 It says, even in my dreams it hurts  
 to breathe

And even if it got rid of its wings, even if  
 the sky could not bear  
 a head, dreams go on

My neck is still listening intently: the daylight  
 passing through dark night  
 calls to me

Ling Yu  
 Translated by Andrea Lingenfelter

## Edge

Like a tomato hiding on the edge of a steelyard he is always  
 lying down. Something flashes past – a warning or a swallow – but he  
 doesn't budge, maintaining his place beside the small things.  
 As the second hand moves to ten on the dot,  
 an alarm clock heads off into the distance. A cigarette  
 also leaves, taking with it several pairs of misshapen blue handcuffs.  
 His glasses, clouds, German locks. In a word, everything that hadn't  
 has now left.

The emptiness gets bigger. He is even further away, but always on  
 some edge: edge of cog-wheels, edge of water, the very edge of  
 his own self. He often looks up into the sky, index finger pointed into the air,  
 practising a spidery, delirious calligraphy: 'Come back!'  
 Sure enough, all those things that lost their shape regain their original form:  
 the windows of a new housing estate are full of evening wind;  
 the moon brews a large barrel of golden beer.  
 The steelyard jerks violently: there, the illimitable  
 comes to recline beside the tomato  
 like a becalmed lion.

Zhang Zao  
 Translated by Simon Patton

## Envoi

When the island woke  
 the ship had gone.  
 Neither wake  
 nor trail of light  
 was seen  
 amid the sea's empty din.

Gathering dark  
 was the lover leaving  
 while the other slept.  
 Impending dark  
 was the lover having left.

Alfred A. Yuson

The 35th Poetry International Festival took place on 12-18 June 2004 in Rotterdam, the Netherlands. 28 poets from 20 countries attended the festival. Poetry International, in collaboration with the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) and the International Institute for Asian Studies, invited six Asian poets to the festival. Information on the programme, the poets and a full list of sponsors can be found at [http://www.poetry.nl/general\\_new/home.php](http://www.poetry.nl/general_new/home.php)



## World Poetry Circuit

1. The Poets Arrive and Shake Hands
2. The Poets Receive Their Breakfast Coupons
3. The Poets Listen to Speeches
4. The Poets Take Their Own Turns Onstage
5. The Poets Attend A Garden Reception
6. The Poets Line Up for The Prince
7. The Poets Are Taken to A Beach Resort
8. The Poets Are Caught Up in Traffic
9. The Poets Pose for A Group Shot
10. The Poets Land in the Papers
11. The Poets Escape Their Hosts
12. The Poets Are Recovered
13. The Poets Talk of War and Poverty, Love and Repression
14. The Poets Are Translated All Over the Place
15. The Poets Quarrel Among Themselves
16. The Poets Fuck One Another
17. The Poets Are Late Again for Dinner
18. The Poets Complain About Everything
19. The Poets Are Finally Given An Hour for Shopping
20. The Poets Seek Out the Last Pub
21. The Poets Exchange Books and Addresses
22. The Poets Thank Everyone with Folk Songs
23. The Poets Settle Their Hotel Bills
24. The Poets Leave for Other Countries
25. The Poets Remember, and Smile to Themselves

Alfred A. Yuson