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Autumn Song

1

Autumn decides, when Orange Jessamine blooms all over Street A, to use the gorgeous white flower bells as lanterns and execute the street lights on both sides, replacing them with crisp, natural autumn light. All welcome the decision except the delegate of the international organization for abolishing capital punishment who has misread the text. To mark off street names, autumn decides, when Orange Jessamine (aka Seven-Mile Fragrance) perfumes seven miles and beyond on Street B, to ward off amorous trespassers by building a fence with the heavy aroma. Autumn also decides, whether they are Street C, D, or E, goldenrain tree, chinaberry, or maple, so long as their colors are bright and their smells alluring, they can link up and form a security system to protect the integrity of fall.

2

To rebuild our city with the utmost post-postmodern fall landscape doesn't need massive construction. At its thinnest, fall is a golden thread that wraps around our city. It slightly affects the office workers but not the traffic.

It's like an invisible escalator handrail that our hands gently lean on to cut across walls and glide up and down in our stairs-only office buildings. It's a circumference, the center close to our fidgety hearts. It's a frisbee; its skim sends us out of the window, takes us to soar with sunset clouds and a solitary hawk. We have this feeling then, that the autumn sky is a blue arena dome, a microwave oven: it incubates our dreams, zaps the painting "Traveling in Autumn Mountains," which we just took out from the walk-in cooler.

秋歌

1

秋決定在整條 A 街月橘花燦開時以亮眼的白色鐘形花冠為燈籠槍決兩側路燈，讓清朗自然的秋光取而代之。秋做了決定，除了誤讀文本的國際廢死刑組織代表外沒有不樂觀其成者。為了區別街名秋決定在整條 B 街月橘（也就是七里香）花香遠飄七里外時，以濃郁的香氣為籬笆，阻止偷香好事者入內。秋又決定，不管 C 街 D 街 E 街，樂樹棟樹楓樹，只要葉色花色夠明麗，氣味夠迷人都可連為保全系統，保全秋之亮節

2

用厚厚的後後現代秋色重組我城不須大興土木。最薄的時候，秋天是一條金黃的線，環繞著我城有點影響上班族，但沒有影響交通它像隱形的電梯扶手，我們手輕靠著，穿牆升降於只有樓梯的我們的辦公大樓。它是圓周，而圓心接近我們忐忑的心。它是飛盤載我們旋出窗外，與落霞孤鷹齊飛我們於是有fu，感覺秋空是一座藍色的小巨蛋，微波爐：孵著我們的夢，微波著我們剛從冷藏室取出的《秋山行旅圖》

註：〈秋歌〉由十三首十三行詩組成，每首十三行詩的首行合在一起，又另成一首新的十三行詩。形成一「聯篇十三行詩」。

3

Frost-tinted leaves outshine February's flowers—an ancient scene created by the poet Du Mu, who, to some, resembled the present-day poet Yang Mu. But Yang Mu is stouter because he likes beer. Do beer and poetry affect the weight of maple leaves? Du Mu drank with hostesses in a saloon. Yang Mu takes a dozen ice-cold beers to his own yard, invites Qilai Mountain to a toast—a party of three, counting his shadow in. I can bear witness; behind my house I see a tipsy Qilai Mountain, its back radiant with blossoms, dreamy, magical. So can my friend, the teacher Zhu, who gets the autumn bonus in a mahjong game, wins with four identical tiles, and reaps a lucrative hand. After collecting money from the other players, he walks out the door and pees, facing the Central Mountain Range like a maple tree.

4

The poet stopped his carriage to admire the maple forest. Today, people park on the maple-lined road and have “car shakes.” They are being economical and efficient. The economy is a bit like autumn austerity; a ripened culmination followed by a sharp release is what happens to nature and human, man and woman, especially in the erratic happenings of love. Only sometimes the passion goes too far or the car windows up too long, one party (or both) collapses, deepening fall sorrow for nothing. It's nice to park the car and take a walk in the season's freshness, the mind emptied of worries, autumn-clear. Shoes and socks off, bare feet touch the ground and feel the vibration on the side, on the bottom, on the toes, on the heels... In a city shocked by continual earthquakes, we are happy to gather the joy brought by all kinds of shakes.

3

霜葉紅於二月花是古代風景
出自詩人杜牧，有人說他有點像
現代的楊牧，但楊牧似乎壯些
因為他愛喝啤酒。啤酒與詩與楓葉
之瘦腴有關乎？杜牧在酒家喝花酒
楊牧在自家花園攜一打冰啤酒
舉杯邀奇萊山，對影成三人
我可以作證。在我家後面看到
微醺的奇萊山背脊上群花艷放
如夢似幻。摸到花牌「秋」，槓上
開花，胡了五台牌，收了各家錢
走到門外像一棵楓樹對著中央山脈
小便的我友朱老師，也可以作證

4

詩人停車坐愛楓林久久，今人則
停車楓林道旁車震，省錢省事
因為經濟有點像秋景蕭條，在
圓熟滿漲後續以崩洩乃不分
物我、男女之常情，特別是
非恆常的男女之情。只是有時
激情太過，或車窗緊閉太久，致
一方（或雙方）不省人事，徒增
秋愁。秋高氣爽，停車散步是好的
散愁心成清秋，脫掉鞋襪，赤腳
觸地，享受側震底震趾震跟震.....
在一個被連續地震所驚嚇的城市
我們欣然收集種種震動的喜悅

5

Drive to Maple Forest Motel to make out for all the time in the world—oops, a typo! I mean, “to hang out for all the time in the world.” I’m exhausted. Besides watching television and making the complementary teas and coffees in the room, I have nothing else to do. What can I do? Fall has come. Sitting in this motel, formerly called Maple Forest Guest House, my heart is the seat of a Maple Forest Ice House, not yet freezing cold and definitely not a place for gorging on shaved ice. What should be harvested has been cut and gathered, the not-yet-harvested is waiting for after-season settlement, the unharvestable will no longer be accountable. What am I here for? It’s late in Maple Forest. All the summer cyclists are gone. What can I do, coming here by myself?

6

Slurping Häagen Dazs maple syrup ice-cream while devouring spicy hot pot—cold and hot mingle. It’s all-you-can-eat, all the seasons can take; take all you can within the time limit. What’s eaten to excess is a bonus. How do you create a Bodinier’s beautyberry or a water lily pond by eating? After fall comes, I take a nap while floating on water, then sleep again until the end of time. *Tao* and *Tie*, the monsters of gluttony, are like two lion statues, standing on both sides of a south-facing pagoda tree. Ants under the tree transport sweet sauce and bread crumbs from our clothes. We harvest; they store. Flour is made into bread, dreams are made into us. We are food for the slumberous lion called *Sleep*. What’s eaten to excess is a bonus.

5

驅車楓林 Motel 做久久——噢，打錯了！是坐久久吾今疲矣。除了看電視，泡房間裡免費的茶包、咖啡包喝什麼也沒做。能做什麼呢秋天已到。坐在舊名楓林賓館的這家 Motel，心中座立著一間楓林冰館。還沒有到冰庫的冷，也斷非消暑吃冰之地。該收割的已收已割沒收的就等秋後算帳，收不到就成呆帳、死帳。還來做什麼？楓林已晚。夏日的自由車選手都已離去。一個人來這裡能做什麼

6

一邊飽嚙哈根達斯楓糖冰淇淋一邊狂吃麻辣鍋。時冷時熱吃到飽，吃到春去秋來，限時搶食，多吃的都是賺的。該怎麼吃出一株紫珠或一池睡蓮來？秋天以後，浮在水上小寐。再睡一覺，直到永恆。饕與饕像兩頭石獅子，立在南柯兩側樹下蟻群戮力搬運我們衣服上掉下的甜汁，麵包屑。我們秋收它們冬藏。麵粉做成麵包，夢做成我們。我們是睡眠這頭睡獅的食物。多吃的都是賺的

7

In maple's ample bosom, without understanding a heart,
 the windbreaks want to surrender and put on
 light-weight, warm red windbreakers. They also
 want wind tunnels to measure hollowness
 before it suddenly attacks. *Outside the windbreaks
 are more windbreaks outside are more
 Yet the sea and the sequence of waves.* Waves
 of sequence bring order to our city and autumn, appearing
 when we flush the commode and pull the toilet paper.
 The glass planter on the bathroom vanity
 turns into a sea basin, hanging the maple windbreaker
 and cap that we can wear home after work:
 we submit ourselves willingly to the fall gear.

8

The citizens can't escape the grip of its charm. Every day
 comes news of attacks on men and women, boys and girls;
 the crimson handprints of shell ginger, balloon flower,
 and maple appear all over the victims' bodies in the shape of
 blossoms and leaves. The sage says, "This is what one calls
 a fatal attraction!" At its ripest, it conquers and pervades everything.
 We fall into the satiation and suppleness of a vacuity.
*La, tout n'est qu'ordre et beauté,
 Luxe, calme et volupté...* The police chief is in a dilemma:
 the higher-ups command an immediate arrest of the eerie hands but
 the people proclaim, "This is the mandate of heaven, the will of God.
 It is not to be disobeyed!" Autumn receives orders to execute.
 The omnipotent is all set, ready to be transported to an ecstasy of death.

7

厚質的楓情任任何不解風情之
 防風林，都想棄暗投明，改穿
 質輕、色暖的紅風衣：它們也想
 防空洞，防止莫名的空洞感
 突然襲身。防風林的外邊
 還有防風林的外邊 還有
 然而海 以及波的羅列。羅列的
 波，給我城，給秋，以秩序
 在我們按水閥沖馬桶，抽取
 衛生紙時，一波波湧現。洗手台上
 玻璃盆栽頓時成為一盆海，掛著
 下班時我們可以穿回家的楓衣
 楓帽：我們心悅臣服的秋之制服

8

市民都難逃其魅力之掌，日常生活
 屢傳男女老少遇襲事，月桃桔梗
 楓槭等花葉形紅紫掌印浮現身體
 各部。智者曰：「此所謂致命之
 吸引力也！」方其圓熟盛極時
 無堅不攻，無物不透，吾人
 陷溺於一飽滿、酥軟之空無中
 那兒，一切是和諧，美，豐盈
 寧靜，與歡愉.....警察局長進退
 失據，上級責其快速緝捕此怪手黨
 民眾則齊呼：此天命、天意也
 莫之可逆！秋奉令行刑，萬物
 所能者唯引頸伸軀等候銷魂爽死

9

An impenetrable/impregnable wonder thus appears in life. We've thought hard, reflected like the Confucian gentleman, implicated the opposite shore, the supernatural. We've hoped to reap some benefit, only to find ourselves in a different realm. Water from the other side won't help a fire burning on this side, not to mention autumn has deflagrated the grains to their utmost ripeness. We have no choice but to watch the disaster and penetrate/impregnate any possible mysteries. The grains ripen in autumn's fire, the rice cooks in ours—that's how flames spread. What we can do now is eat, then steal autumn's full moon, seizing its light for a night stroll or lifting its circle for a waltz. Or we can find delight in misery, reshape mishaps with joy and blessing. Autumn, the arsonist, has insured us; we can put our mind to rest, and put the fire to rest.

10

Tending the mind: autumn sounds no longer sadden in their clinking.
Tending the body: of neither metal nor rock, how can it competes with grass and wood? Ignoring the mind: like the blind finding a home in their acute hearing, fall percussion relaxes in its own beats.
Ignoring the body: instead of the endless complaints about my pains, why not follow the bubbly butterflies on their exquisite travel to nothingness? Nature's provision for all: nascent in spring, firm in fall.
Frankly, that's a paradox; a robust growth to firmness is but a depletion toward emptiness. Applauding fall with such grandiloquence, what a "fall of all"! After winter comes spring; fruit grow from nothing. Oh, fall has two faces: fall/of all. This isn't a tall tale; it's the fact!
You come, I go. Two falls. In fact, just one fall of all.

9

生命遂有了小／三思不得其解的美妙
我們曾猛思、九思，與彼岸、與鬼神
小三通，可能獲致之好處，發現
彼我異界，遠水救不了近火，更何況
秋之火已然將禾穀燒得如此熟爛
我們只好親自直視此災情，小思、三思
其中可能有之奧意。秋火將穀穗燒熟
我們將生米燒成飯，此火勢之必然
我們只能先吃了再說，且趁火打劫
在秋月滿盈時，或奪其光以夜遊，或
順其圓以旋舞漫歌，苦中作樂，幸災
樂禍，亦人生妙事也。縱火者秋，為
我們投保了個人險，我們放心撲火吧

10

重心：秋聲不再鏗鏘錚錚令人悲
重形：非金石之質如何與草木爭榮？
輕心：秋組織的打擊樂，多似盲生們
耳聽八方，輕鬆自在的敲敲打打
輕形：與其喋喋不休說這裡痛那裡痛
何妨學她們蝶蝶不羞，美麗地飛不見
天之於物，春生秋實。老實說，這話
真弔詭，既茁壯老成而實，又老去
掏空而虛。大言不慚只說秋的好話
場面話，真「秋秋臉」！冬去，春來
果實由虛而生。啊，秋天有兩張臉：
秋／秋臉。不必害羞，此其實也！
你來，我去，兩秋天。其實只一個秋

11

Except the myriad of taxes, no need to praise in poetry
the authorities' wisdom. Oh, I'd rather write ten thousand lines to
extol the Republic of China—Long live its tax system—than make
regular tax payments to the seasons: spring imposes puberty tax
(super expensive; my adolescence is super long). Summer issues
heat strokes like lottery strikes, the winnings taxed multiple times.
Autumn wind, rain, cool, and longing are all too sorrowful and
taxing. Winter is chilly, chilly, chilly; one moment its cold pierces
the heart, the next moment the fog obscures the future.
A weak body needs nourishment like caterpillar fungus or
sky-chilling agar, luxury tax applied. In the anarchy of
the four seasons, voluntary tax collectors are everywhere.
Only after fall are outstanding taxes penalized, reckoned.

12

A weary heart and a beaten body of a life...
How to treat anxiety? Try Prozac, aka a hundred worries' relief, or
Cymbalta, a thousand worries' relief. I had two cycles of Cymbalta
for my pains in the past year. After an eight-week treatment in spring,
my anxiety became agitation. I "wrote" two hundred short poems by
circling words in other poems. Another two-month treatment in fall,
surges of inspiration sprouted more than a hundred poems (including
these), breaking my record of decades. The poet-psychiatrist,
first name Sea-facing, last name Whale, said, "If somebody has
a writer's block, I'll prescribe Cymbalta!" Alas, physical pains cause
countless worries—relieve them by working the mind. Treat bipolar with
autumn songs, spring songs; let the gloomy fish swim from the sea of
morning blue to the sea of indigo ink: is this the poet's secret remedy?

11

名目繁多的賦稅外，無須作賦詠嘆
今上之英明。啊，我情願寫萬行詩
歌頌中華民國萬稅萬萬歲，也不要
一年到頭按時向四季繳稅：春天
要繳思春、發春稅（費用超高，我的
青春期又超長）；夏天中暑如中獎
要抽好幾次稅；秋天，秋風秋雨秋涼
秋思樣樣愁煞人、課你稅；冬天凍凍
凍，一會兒心冷心寒心顫，一會兒
大霧籠罩世路茫茫，體弱多衰，冬蟲
夏草、寒天藻絲等等補品都要奢侈稅
四季無政府，四處皆見義勇收稅員
拖繳欠繳，一律秋決或者秋後清算

12

百憂感心、萬物勞形的人生.....
如何解憂？可試百憂／千憂解
近一年體痛心憂，兩番服千憂解
去春吃了八週，轉憂為躁，圈字成
短詩兩百首。秋後再吃兩個月，突然
靈思湧動，十週內敲鍵成長短詩
百餘首（這些詩即是），破我數十秋
記錄。詩人精神科醫師鯨向海說：
下次如有人寫不出詩，就開千憂解
給他！噫，形勞體痛讓人百憂、千憂
——勞心除憂，以秋歌春歌解躁鬱
讓憂鬱的魚群從晨間藍海，悠游
到藍墨水海，其詩人私房解藥乎？

13

The rear garden swing and post-ethical aesthetics will strike all. Post-rear garden swing aesthetics is attributed to the classical novel *The Plum in the Golden Vase*. In chapter 25, swinging on a spring day, Wu Yueniang, her ladies, and a rogue play together, couldn't care less about rules. Two chapters later, the drunken Pan Jinlian romps under a grape trellis, suspends herself with a rope so Ximen Qing can swing and strike—this is post-rear garden swing aesthetics. Swing over this side into fall, over that side into eons (i.e. fall). Before the strike, ethical; after, unethical. Fall is in the middle. Falling in the middle, fall strikes the swing into eons when we read and have tea at Fall Waters Hall, a bookstore selling simplified-character books. Outside, glamorous lights and numerous stars gaze at each other. The look in our eyes, soothing as the waters of fall.

* comprising all the first lines in "Autumn Song"

Autumn decides, when Orange Jessamine blooms all over Street A, to rebuild our city with the utmost post-postmodern fall landscape. Frost-tinted leaves outshine February's flowers—an ancient scene: the poet stopped his carriage to admire the maple forest. Today, people drive to Maple Forest Motel to make out for all the time in the world, slurping Häagen Dazs maple syrup ice-cream. In maple's ample bosom, without understanding a heart, the citizens can't escape the grip of its charm. Every day, an impenetrable/impregnable wonder thus appears in life, tending the mind: autumn sounds no longer sadden in their clinking. Except the myriad of taxes, no need to praise in poetry a weary heart and a beaten body of a life... The rear garden swing and post-ethical aesthetics will strike all.

Notes: "Autumn Song" 3: Du Mu (803-852) was a Tang Dynasty poet. Yang Mu (1940-) is a Taiwanese poet whose hometown is Hualien. Qilai Mountain is part of Taiwan's Central Mountain Range. "Autumn Song" 4: "Car shakes" is a literal translation of a recent Chinese slang term for car sex. "Autumn Song" 7: The italicized portion comes from the concrete poem "Scenery No. 2" by the Taiwanese poet Lin Hengtai (1924-). "Autumn Song" 8: The part in French is from Baudelaire's "*L'invitation au voyage*." "Autumn Song" 12: In late 2011, Chen Li had carpal tunnel syndrome and was unable to write and type. More extensive physical pain followed and eventually led to bouts of depression.

13

後花園秋千和後倫理美感將盪漚一切
後後花園秋千美學，據說發軔於小說
《金瓶梅》，第25回吳月娘春晝秋千
眾娘兒與壯丁一，秋千上盡享遊戲之樂
而無倫次之分。過兩回，潘金蓮醉鬧
葡萄架，以繩繫自己為人肉秋千，讓
西門慶盪之漚之，此後後花園秋千
美學。盪過來秋千，盪過去千秋（
即秋千）。洗漚前，倫理；洗漚後
不倫。而秋居其中。秋居其中，將
秋千盪成千秋／萬世，當我們在秋水堂
簡體書店翻書，喝茶。店內華燈
繁星互視，我們的目光如秋水舒緩

*

秋決定在整條A街月橘花燦開時
用厚厚的後後現代秋色重組我城
霜葉紅於二月花是古代風景
詩人停車坐愛楓林久久，今人則
驅車楓林 Motel 做久久
一邊飽嚙哈根達斯楓糖冰淇淋
厚實的楓情任任何不解風情之
市民都難逃其魅力之掌，日常生活
生命遂有了小／三思不得其解的美妙
重心：秋聲不再鏗鏘錚錚令人悲
名目繁多的賦稅外，無須作賦詠嘆
百憂感心、萬物勞形的人生.....
後花園秋千和後倫理美感將盪漚一切