

五季:節錄

春歌 (之一)

夏歌 (之一)

Translated from Chinese by Elaine Wong

Five Seasons: An Excerpt

From "Spring Song"

The wind is the lightest music and fragrance player. After visiting Taroko Gorge, Hachikai Mimi, my Japanese poet-friend, says the mountains breed laterally across the sky, clinging to one another, smelling at one another. She asks the swallows in Swallow Grotto to talk about how they feel when they see the sky change into a precipice. She tells them to extend their vocal folds, pick up the bookmarks whose voices have been erased, and put them in the ever-extending pages of ocean and mountains. She says these words standing in front of Zen Light Temple. The poet's mouth is the most delicate music and fragrance player that doubles as a translation machine—using poetry, the language in front of the temple, to gently translate the rocks and crags in the gorge, as well as the immense Pacific lazurite, into sounds and scents.

From "Summer Song"

The high ground where touch, smell, and sight unite. The tri-color flag of milk white, musk brown, and rosy red. The medal molded by flowing gold, summer sun, and tangerine scent. The fluorescing cup presenting a cash award of wine. The U-shaped high blue bay below the U-shaped downhill trail. The throng of three-pronged forks throbbing at a whole-fish feast. The flower umbrellas rotating in their legato, libero, and cadenza performances. The dictionary of smells that the wind's index finger flips through. The shore in its sit-in demonstration, waving long, long, long banners of whitewater. The faraway sticker fixing seven mint flavors into a rainbow. The frothy green tea whisked with sandy sugar

and icy ripples. The aria falsetto notes for which coloratura and floral aroma

contend. The midnight concert in Amphitheater Universe, silence a cappella.

秋歌 (之一)

冬歌 (之一)

From "Autumn Song"

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 does all that you eat create a Bodinier's beautyberry or a water lily pond? 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.

From "Winter Song"

Capsized on the livid sea, filled with sparkling diamond droplets and sapphires, the waves are held up from landing. We whistle, make secret signs, but they do not rise as promised to the embankment where we sit all afternoon. Someone says winter security exercise has started; people on the tramp, waves on the drift without passports or papers cannot go in and out freely. Perhaps the sea has a nationality, but I'm not sure about the waves

that disappear as soon as they come. The winter coastline is so long and bleak, the waves cross together illegally, disguise their looks, and go ashore. Who can stop them? Welcome, go on smuggling the gems of spring and summer, or the amber of fall. In all, show them some colors!

CHEN LI

十三月

TRANSLATED FROM CHINESE BY ELAINE WONG

The Thirteenth Month

a. Munching loudly, spring relishes on your chest the small steamed bun, slippery as a little eel. Mountain view and the sea's savor begin with the desktop wallpaper polished by the city every day. The wind is the lightest music and fragrance player, bundling ebook reader with bird tweet and floral fragrance, gently opening each face book, standing or walking. By the windbreaks at Seven-Star Pool outside the city, we hear a Jin poet and a Tang poet take turns to peddle steamed buns. Du Kang, freshly downloaded, is now a post under the cypress: "Can you add me as your friend? Wouldn't that be delightful?" Perfect! Such edible, touchable spring glamor. In our open-air lodging that refines taste, touch, and look.

b

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?

Time battles against me, yet with your troops reinforcing me from behind, your voice-typing strategy in front of the hill on a summer night, the pling-plong sounds of the waterfall you reformatted into crack troops, I go through all the hour, minute, and second needles in the needle forest.

Guerrilla attacks down memory creek fearlessly storm the high ground where touch, smell, and sight unite.

Show the opposition some color, some smell... Make it memo-

rable.
Square bombs charged with the pictographic, ideographic, semantico-phonetic—
their power: these uneven lines are

dispersed by flash drives and memory cards—zip files of our humble war records / love histories.

Fall 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 fool around 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.

d.
The gray-blue sea is now a huge old ship, capsized on the livid sea, filled with discarded electrical appliances, cold-stored bird tweet, rainbow, poppy fragrance: winter, coming into port. Like the solemn preparation for putting out to sea, we flag signals on shore while waiting. Scarves and waves intersect: the sounds of an incoming call and breakers. It something is urgent, yet no use to be anxious about some things. I regret my arrogance. It often comes too slow—among the goods arriving last year, too slow to find the right medicine when a bias looks like a migraine to you, stuck to you every day, the shadow of the persistently unruly sailor. The ship is finally docking and then departs. Customs do not inspect

Note: Each of the four poems in "The Thirteenth Month" comprises the first lines of the poems in "Spring Song," "Summer Song," "Autumn Song," and "Winter Song," respectively.

those abstract, conceptual things—because they are too heavy.