

罪恶研究

Researching Evil

PREFATORY NOTE: The foundations of this poem lie in two important events in 2022: first, the Ukraine War; second, China's Chained Woman. She was a sex slave kidnapped and sold by traffickers to Shifeng County, Xuzhou, Jiangsu Province. When she was found her tongue had been cut out, all her teeth extracted, and around her neck was an iron chain: her psychological state and her powers of speech had been grossly impaired and she had been left with severe disabilities; she had also been raped and had borne eight children as a result of 'traditional' treatment by the peasants who bought the use of her. This incident has reduced 'Mother' to the dirtiest word in the vocabulary of the Chinese language. After this was exposed on the internet, it set off a tidal wave of popular anger, gaining tens of millions of hits, shares and comments in no time at all, as well as fierce attacks on the official media and the legal system which cover up underworld vice. Since the 1989 Tiananmen Massacre in Beijing, this is the first time the Chinese people have exploded in a massive movement of spiritual enlightenment. I have called it 'An off-street Tiananmen'.

white snow can be an infernal machine too
to crush so many dying of a life
so many ghosts released by one death
Pushkin's tears
Tsvetaeva's tears
pile on the shoulders of bronze statues unmelting metal
pawning rhymes of nothingness dragged through
the hearts set up as empty shells
a poem might also be (can only be) the mass grave of poetry
burial locking up pain too deep for tears
the same early spring ten thousand miles away
nailed into a collarbone a catastrophe
drowns another catastrophe recycled flesh and blood

recycled into forgetting so many ghosts
still crawling from resurrection-emptied graves
motionless ruins reduced to rubble in their mouths
making us mistakenly think
an era of despair is new

why has this muddy and inert road no ending?
this grey-green conifer forest gaze ice-cold
why has it only left rancid meaning the same as the pale sun?
charming Katya Natasha shrapnel sticking to their chests
like new-picked blood mushrooms
is this the homecoming you were all waiting for?
a bird flushed into flight from someone else's hometown
was it granted the power to appear in your dreams?
big-eyed skulls gaze straight at bombed-out streets
only one question why destroy all this?
how much longer must this downhill ladder go till it arrives at
the terror of children a vacuum like a fireball exploding
hanging deep in the heart could the world have been blinded by fire
long ago?

that tunnel in a mother's body
leads to chains leads to lying
a vast grand piano smashed to pieces every day
ocean waves slap human needlegrass shivers in the wind
mother the humblest word the filthiest word
leads to layers of bloodstain strata
and another dumbstruck morning
watching her locked on a butchered mother-tongue
watching us locked in the bomb shelter of shame
the same tattered shirts and crawling on the ground scrape away human
bubbles
the umbilical tunnel lets us witness a road under guard
dug into our bodies corpses folded onto corpses
forever empty oh listen the wind's wail has no history
a species that can't save mothers doesn't even deserve doomsday

but this really is doomsday
a maggot wears countless shades of grey shrivelled names
on every stone squat hordes of refugee ghosts
this is spring the worst bloodstained news sprouts faster than green leaves
bloodstains cover over bloodstains our dried-up surfaces
almost equal to fictions a loss before our very eyes
the phantoms of home scatter and vanish faster than tear-filled eyes
a mother's used-up vagina must still go on being used up
draw a planet's orbit the non-distance between death and death
a never-past March asks is there truly a way back?
Spring's face that leaves behind some enchantment being clearly and
clearly stroked
like a false emblem

a crime can't remember the beginning but only the weight of shadows
fills in none of Death Row but only human-shaped shell holes
stops at the shape of a sleeper left by a deserted road
the dirty hand on the red button lightly twists the stamen of destruction
twirls the topic on the dinner table glasses and plates daintily jingle
corpselike tongues licking child-charring fires
timidity so tasty saves your body
makes it quietly and softly putrify saves your silence
explosively chokes your lungs saves a life seeping away each second
it isn't anything at all but crime itself
staring at the madness of a branch of peach blossom like madness
created by fingers March collapsing March soaked in sweat
seeing us tied to a ghost's bed falling further than ghosts into
nowhere no word more shameless than innocence
no little hand stretching from the soil that hasn't gripped my body-odour
no iron umbilical cord that hasn't pulled out a bone-grey river
it knows no other future but disappearance itself
disappearing in the shocking sight of a branch of peach blossom
beauty layer on layer palms all sticky with farewell train windows
a whistle blows everything away

this is an unwriteable poem an impossible poem
there is no one in this poem all that's left is everyone

facing the mirror of crime the mirror of evil
Li Shangyin's tears fall independently of ours
who is who's counterfeit the illusion cursing in the mirror
recognise the only division is real shattered on a reef
mended in thick fog feeble echoes
wiped and wiped away again from white snow to peach blossom hear
poetry reciting with no heart a history arises from an empty shell
painlessly walks out of itself

we have always lived like this