

TWO POEMS: DRAGONFLY, HOMETOWN

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Dragonfly

The anger is rolled, spit out as a red, hot ball
Evoking a classic, Chinese style of guilt

The language kills itself the moment it was read
Because the writing was banned—and it became a death scene

The ransom of the soul takes a lifetime's search
Climbing up the steps, looking for a poem, going the wrong direction

The Christians talk about forgiveness, as Confucius would too
But the wound is made, only to be revisited

Again and again. Whether it is
The missing death record of a forgotten June, or

The family blood tie stamped on paper with black ink
Your Chinese zodiac sign and the date of birth

A name of three characters you no longer use
Grandpa says one's fate is already within the *Book of Change*

The harder you try to cut the string, the tighter it binds
And you hope to cut it loose

and cling to it at the same time.
Into the shape of a dragonfly, the wound

has metamorphosed. The arrow of its spine—
shadowed on the sand—refuses to be categorized

No one knows who this person is who unveils
only under a mask. No one, including herself

Hometown

Autumn night was thin and cold. Desires straddled
over me on heavy steps. But not as heavy
as the shackle of time, and far less so
than truth—soaked with blood and cold as iron.
To walk through a sky of black crow wings,
And to press down the mask with tight-closed lips
Hauling a soul, devastated, and struggle
with breaking off a rib bone to write poetry on earth

A slender mast was erected in the desert
A blue storm was rolling through the reflection of red beams
One stands in front of an anonymous white flower
And watches the cruel gears of time that separates us away

Pale and dim like the dying ashes of a grizzled lamp
Or like a pair of untainted eyes which were born
under a silent night of heavy snow.
Standing in the middle of air and mud, on a plain
that was once boundless, but now swallowed up
and left with no trace by unspeakable shame

To retouch the words like taking off your shoes
And to let the cold sole sink into warm and damp soil.
Minerals from the brown particles are like the scars
left on your mother's belly. Stop pretending
that you do not love this world like to stop
pretending that you are not a poet.
Use the lips that grew from the rib bone
To kiss her devastated soul, and marvel
at how both the sources of earth and words are a woman

The giant outlines of mother and desire
Rise slowly under the purple night
Shining brightly on your distant childhood.
Shadow of the spirit drifts into a slender mast
In a boundless desert when the snow falls
In my hometown, the falling of a giant loneliness