

One Imperative
Fever

The Poui Tree of Kwai Fong

A line drawn across the land
By which a people dreamt to cross
To trouble the wages of politeness
Taking meaning into their own hands

A town like all those it borders
Shod by the crooks of convenient planning
Yet raised by meed and weal
Of a time past recalled into hopeful intents

These are not mere pilgrims gasping chants
Cadences scorning orderly meekness
Jostling with voices, all the other voices
To rise above this unruly skyline

Soon the cheering will begin
Straining to catch all the songs
That have gathered under the bower of delight
To take aim at your blossoming radiance

And you stand
Amid season after season
Of undoing
And you remain standing

Lim Lee Ching
July-August 2019

ADULT LOVE

I have been used to wearing his t-shirts as nightshirts for more than a year now. I thought about hosting a bonfire, with my friends and I lighting our cigarettes from the flames, or cutting them up into neat squares to wipe my bathroom floor and windows. Then I recognised that there is more of me – not necessarily less of him, in the grey fabric that rested above his hips, and now brushes my thighs.

Brinda Gulati
August 2019

In Transit

The fear envelops me, dropped
in a mailbox of *idée fixe* dark.

Amid rumors, the fever spreads,
we're all destined for the dead

letter office, where we will be
neither forwarded nor returned.

We wait to be picked up and delivered,
muffled in this pregnant-blue canister.

Two postcards start to chatter,
about to bum, ill-lit but well travelled.

They say I am a privileged one.
I'll be picked up, sorted out, and sent on,

but I'll learn upon arrival the bell
that awaits a piece of junk mail.

Joe Linker
August 2019
Portland, Oregon

Senna

Michael Kearney

*Holding you in my arms,
Malibu beach.
Your head cradled upon my chest;
Your soft, loosely-wavy, mousy hair,
Silky warm, nuzzles my throat.*

*Senna, your love overcomes me
On Malibu beach.
You are contrite with me
For taking too long
to get back to you;
You are weeping because of me
Taking too long to get back to you;
It was merely minutes,
What love.*

*“Senna, sorry, I am so Sorry;
I will never leave you again.*

Senna

...

marry me

...

Please

...

Please”

You, dearest Senna, say “yes”

*Overwhelmed with the most intense feeling of
love I have ever felt
I open my eyes to look into your deep azure ...*

Shock overcomes me. From prone position, rise on elbows. What the hell is this? My heart sinks. Where is Senna? Where am I? Where is this? My synapses snap to compute, configure; my mind attempts to focus, to figure ... What's going on?

Groggy, I recognize the pillow; it is mine, but who am I? I recognize the headboard; it is ours, but not whoever-me and Senna's – a someone me, which me(?), a real me(?), a figment me(?), a me(?) and ... Karen's(?) ... a me and my wife's headboard, bed? My wife? Why do I think I am married to a woman named Karen? Is that right? It can't be, I can't see any Karen ... here or in my mind ...

My mind has an image, only one image, an image I want to maintain, to hold forever, an image of Senna. I must get back to Senna.

My stomach physically twists, knots with the tension of deep loss, enormous grief, felt, but not yet contemplated; pure emotional grief, a panicked longing, not yet rationalized; not yet controlled by the layers of programmed defense mechanisms that deaden emotion, limit anguish. I think I am going to be sick; I semi-collapse against the bed as I struggle to survey around me, as I struggle to find Senna in the room. I

am coming out of a blur, none of this could be real ...
but slowly it pushes in on me ... this is, real ... it can't
be real ...

Where is Senna? What kind of nightmare is this that
attempts to eradicate all trace of the love of my soul?
Who, what, is pulling Senna away from me; trying to
pull her out of me?

Senna is missing, that I know, I think. No, I know: she
is not in this chamber.

The name Karen creeps into thought again ... my wife
of decades? Can that be a truth? Where is Karen? No
one here but a me, which me? I know this room, I
think I have lived here for decades with ... Karen?
Karen ... it comes to words slowly — Karen is visiting
her mother. What, who, is running this reel; it can't
be The Real ... I must have been drugged and some
nefarious creature is trying to con me ... gotta get back
to Senna, she needs me ... I need her, I will die
without her, of that, the only thing I am sure.

Pull myself back on to bed, close my eyes; evade,
avoid, must destroy the vision of a no Senna existence
that is infecting me ... lie still, close your eyes, recede
deep inside, find Senna on Malibu Beach, you were just
there, merely seconds ago, get back to her, push back
to her, she will be contrite that you left ... why did
you leave asshole, you promised to stay with her ... I
did not leave: I was pulled away by something, a
darkness coming through the light ...

Stop trying to figure this bullshit out — trust what you feel, only words lie ... focus on Senna's image, Senna's skin against yours, Senna's hair — mousy, focus on it — nuzzling your throat ... focus on Senna's eyes — azure — Senna's dress, dark blue, (Does she like Blue???) with a pale-ish white-ish flower print (Is that her style??? Is she dressed in a style I like??? I thought I like Goth). Stop thinking, sink back to sleep ... (Was it sleep???) TRY TO GET BACK!!! Keep saying her name, hold on to her name, hold on to Senna; Senna loves you so much, Senna is surely waiting; you love Senna so much, you must surely be able to make it ... eyes tight, recall images, don't think, breathe, respire ... stop thinking ... focus on image ... remove words ... Burroughs' Virus ... stop thinking ... slide away ... fall back to Senna ... Senna ... Senna ...

You fail. You have to go to the toilet. If you were brave, if you really loved Senna, you would have wet the bed ... done even worse, if you really loved her. You are now doubting her. It was merely a dream, like any other, all the others. This you, your pillow, your room, your Karen — your dear wife of over twenty years, who you are sure you love; these are the immediate things of assurance of The Real ... the stairs, the curtains, the electric toilet seat, heated, with bidet ... yes you are home. Sit, have a morning smoke, try to remember that dream.

Hmm ... Senna? Her image, the one you can recall ... pretty clear ... usually these dream-girls images are vague upon waking ... not Senna's ... still so clear, must have got embedded in your neural pathways like the images of dead loved ones that you can still see so clearly in your mind ... that's never happened with one of these girls before. Hmm ...

The smoke clears your head, nicotine sharpens your thoughts. It was all a dream, just a dream, intense, but merely a product of your imagination. As your mind sharpens, focuses, and you recall the details of your dream, a point becomes clear: "Senna?" Where did that name come from? You do not know anyone named Senna. In your recollections, you have never come across that name before, but it is so powerful, so clear in your dream, still clear in your mind now. Never before in a dream had a name ever been so apparent. So strange. And the feeling of loss is still throbbing within you. It was just a dream. You have been awake for ten minutes. You are sure it was just a dream, yet you cannot get away from it. The hurt is not dissipating, and the name keeps running in your mind. You grab your phone to look-up the name Senna (you even know the spelling, so strange). As you type, Aryton, the racer that died in 1994 starts showing-up, but the name in the dream cannot be connected to him — you are not a big racing fan, you vaguely remember his existence, (his name was Aryton, you would have said Anton) and there was nothing in the dream that connected to him. You type "Senna woman's name" and get "girl's name of Arabic origin meaning

brightness.” Senna, the perfect name for your eternal love. You sit on the couch, light another cigarette, close your eyes and reflect.

Hours pass. Your whole day, sitting, recalling the dream, recalling Senna. Your feeling of love for her does not fade. You go through your memory of the dream like a detective, searching for meaning. How could this mere dream be affecting you this much? You are deeply in love with Senna, a woman that does not exist, that never existed, yet your love for her is stronger than any other emotion you have ever felt. It does not make sense.

You were in Malibu. You have never been in Malibu. You look-up Malibu. Satellite images and photos of the beach confirm the setting from your dream: those homes along the beach, the railings. Two natural wood, one bright indigo, the next white. The hill formations in the background. This was the place where Senna and you were!!! Perhaps. It is so clear in your memory, but how? You have never been to Malibu. Nor do you recall ever seeing a movie or TV show that features real scenes of the Malibu beach. You can't be sure, nor should you try to push this confirmation too far. Yes, it looks like the Malibu of your dream, but perhaps this pattern of shapes and colors has been produced a myriad of times throughout all of time and space. Your grandfather, long deceased was also in the dream. Why was he in the dream? For what would his presence be necessary? While he only had a small part in the dream, an ancillary role of

assuring you that you and Senna's love was real, was pure, was eternal. He was there to confirm to your subconscious mind that your and Senna's love was true. He would never lie to you, never steer you wrong.

Your sense of loss is growing as the day passes on. You try to take a nap, to reenter that world, but your mind is racing.

You sit for hours, smoking, drinking coffee. You do not work. You sit. You are traumatized at the loss of Senna. Your rational mind keeps trying to dismiss the memories of the dream, the feelings you are having. You wonder if you are having a mental breakdown. No. Everything is as it should be, except that this "dream" is affecting you as if it were real. You know that when dreaming, often, the person does not know they are dreaming. But upon waking, you reset to conscious existence. You have done all this, have been able to dismiss everything except for your love for Senna — your love for Senna is the real thing you have ever felt. This is too strange: you have reset to conscious existence, but Senna, your love for her remains as strong and real as when you were holding her in your arms on Malibu Beach.

A theory starts to form. What if Senna is a love from a past life, or a future one? Where does that leave Karen? If Senna is the love of your eternal soul, then why is she not part of your current life? Perhaps she is your eternal love from a different plane of existence, a

different dimension — perhaps, while asleep, your
essence traveled across dimensions. Perhaps, Horatio,
there is more of whatever this is we are part of than we
can ever fathom.

Senna, every night, I relish sleep,
go to it eagerly,
not to find a truth,
not for answers,
they are not important.
I rush to bed with only one hope,
the chance to embrace you again.



Céline Coderey, *Fiamme*, 2019

Genius Spirytus Entry in *Bescyclopedia*

Setsuko Adachi

The only known description of *genius spirytus* is in *Bescyclopedia* as follows:

genius spirytus. Also known as the *keys to life*. It is traditionally believed that if you inhale them, they make you intoxicated with the realm of pricelessness. Most *genius spirytus* exist diluted in the ocean, inactive. They flow along with whichever current they happen to be part of. It is only when they are heated, that they begin to rise. If they are floating at the very bottom of the ocean, they need the current to run over the ridge where the magma from the interior of the earth is keeping the water warm. However, once they are heated, they quickly merge together to keep the heat going. The heat propels them upward; the more heat they have, the more mobile they are. They keep rising higher. If they lose heat, they go back to being immobile floaters. When they reach the water's surface, and if there is enough warmth, *genius spirytus* evaporate. If they lose heat, they become inactive and drop down, back to the land, or into the water. They are in their element when they connect with human bodies, and they connect only with those who have a thirst for the soil and a

passion for art. Once in the human system, they synergize with the host. When *genius spirytus* have a fever, they can cause shivering called *frisson*, also known as aesthetic chills or skin orgasms. *Genius spirytus* have been known to cure depressed art lovers who suffer alienation from nature.

(Frau Ada Schwarz)

The writer of the letter below, he was twenty-four years old at that time, had he inhaled *genius spirytus*, he would have found a quick remedy for his ailment:

[T]here is no soil to set foot on; it is like living in a complete stone cave; that wears my nerves down. Countless numbers of artistic, cultural achievements are put on in the evenings, dramas, operas, and music concerts; I almost wished I could divide myself into three; that makes me hesitant to think of leaving Berlin.¹

¹ Michio Takeyama (1903-1984) to Tatsukichi Katayama in Tokyo, April 21, 1928. In 平川祐弘編著『手紙を通して読む竹山道雄の世界』藤原書店 2017年, p.92. Adapted translation by the author.

celluloid sincerity

Ingratitude, you are worn like a string of fake pearls;
flaunted shamelessly as a swirling cape festooned with
cheap twinkling plastic gemstones.

Cajoling and receiving pithy-tongued and fawning
supplication;
pirouetting in the fickle glow of temporal fame;
you prostitute yourself to those
who would gild your lily
for their fleeting token pleasure

You forget your return to abject drudgery
when the fevered delirium of your fantasy world finally
spins away

Would that you know the only hand that fed you
— that you are savaging —
can turn on you

And fling you back into the dirt
that you once crawled through.

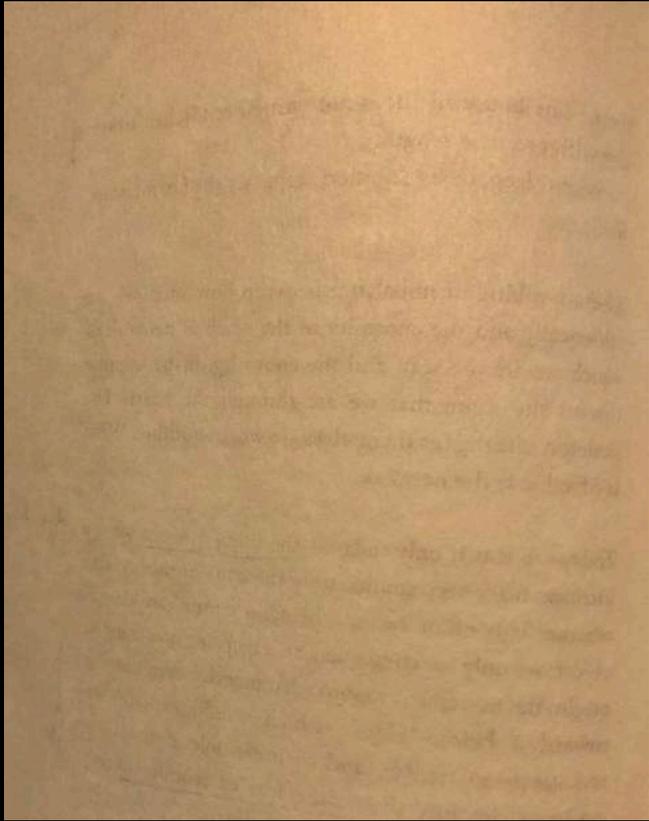
Ling Teo
30 August 2019

There were a time
I was more reckless with my heart

Jeremy Fernando



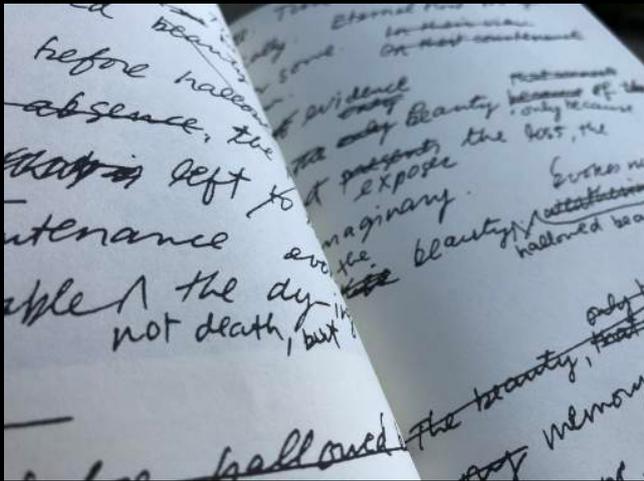
And they said Dada was dead, 2019



l'écriture de l'oubli, 2019



girl, interrupted, 2018



the writing of the forgotten, 2018



found, lost, 2017



les balayuses sont les derniers peintres du monde, 2016

descending into utopia

in the heart of the city in a garden sits an agency
brimming with the best and the brightest
all brooding over their screens — intensely

it took what must have been a million hours — and perhaps
a million people
crossing the country — maps in one hand; cameras in the
other
carefully framing and freezing space in time

captured:
every branch, every leaf, every flower;
every street light, curb light, traffic light;
every building, every pillar, post and sewage cover

gradually, steadily, surely, the city was compressed
ground down into millions of bytes spread many servers
over
then regenerated betwixt and between millions of crystals
and diodes

the city had gone —
digital

the touch of one digit traces trees to be shaped
the pressure of another marks lights to be fixed
and the tap of a third sends an invisible army out to do their
work

if any of these necromancers had heard of the Cartographers
Guilds
they might've thought to peek outside their cocoon
and make sure the city were still there

but when art is an unaffordable luxury
nobody comprehends absurdity;
and absurdity itself disappears

it must be nice
to live in a place where every interfering fern
is snipped before it can take root

though what must it be like
to live in a place where shadows have to be rendered
yet offer no refuge

Pavan Mano
October 2019

The Collapse of the Amphitheater

Setsuko Adachi

The soles of the woman's shoes had not laid their steps on the soil. Her commute was from a concrete box (home) to another concrete box (office). They were connected by concrete or asphalt surfaces and by escalators, elevators, and electric trains. The city was highly composed of artificial material, which was supported by another artificiality: the artificial system of life. If you have money, you live. If you do not, you die. She and her husband had enough income to sustain good health and mental states until their life spans ran out.

She was a bit down from her relations with her colleagues. From the train, she placed her order online on the smartphone. Then she quickly texted her husband that she was going to have Thai noodles delivered for her dinner from one of the shops in The Amphitheater. As the train pulled into her station, she pressed the "Deliver in 10-20 minutes" button. It worked beautifully. The food delivery was made within a few minutes after she got back home, and upon the delivery confirmation, a cashless payment was processed.

A text from her husband came in as she set her dinner on the table: "Go ahead and eat. Going to stop by The Amphi to stretch and refresh." The Amphitheater was a great facility. It was designed

to uplift people's psyches. They offered unbelievably diverse psyche up-lifters at affordable prices.

She seated herself and admired the night view: The Amphitheater complex was well designed and attractively illuminated. She spotted *Stone Cell*. The shop sold sound experiences in stone caves. It also carried a chemical called *genius spirytus* or *frisson* inducer. According to the store manager, *frisson* was supposed to be one of the best sensations one could ever experience in a lifetime. When she tried *genius spirytus*,² the chemical did nothing to her. To the disappointed woman, the store manager said her constitution was not meant for it.

She began digging into her spicy noodles, and the food did for her what she needed. It uplifted her feelings. Her stress alleviated. She felt good and relaxed.

She looked over at The Amphitheater and uttered, "Thank you."

² For further details on *genius spirytus*, see the entry in *Bescyclopedia*. The reprint can be found in *One Imperative — Fever* (Issue 24, 2019).

The tiny concrete box used to be the home to her family of four: she and her husband, their son, and her husband's father. Their boy was the only child, not just of their nuclear family, but also of her extended family as well. The phenomenon was standard in the city. Clearly, artificial intervention to discontinue *homo sapiens* was at work.

Their son was dearly loved by all.

When they lost the boy, he was five. The soil of the amphitheater swallowed the boy and his grandfather.

When the boy was born, the three of them, grandfather, father, and mother, had arranged it such that the grandfather would take care of the boy while his parents worked full-time so they could save money. No babysitter, no nursery.

So, in the daytime, if it was not raining, the grandfather and the boy spent time in the ruins of the ancient amphitheater. The ruins were only a hundred meters away from where they lived. No gate, no admission. The boy loved the amphitheater. So did the grandfather. They were not alone. People strolled, dated, and picnicked.

The boy's parents worked long hours to keep the four peoples' lives going and to save money for a stable future. They never had the time to set foot in it.

Back then, at the ruins of ancient amphitheater, nature was steadily but surely retrieving itself. The earth was lifting the stone slates and loosening them. Plants grew, and bugs inhabited the earth. These life forms brought to the ruins their organically sane order.

The boy had a great time. For example, the boy would be crouching down quite focused on one of the stone seats. He remained still, gave out no sign of life. Then abruptly, he would snap out of it, and his whole body would exert itself in excitement. He ran down the stone seats to the bottom. He had just watched the male *mantodea*, praying mantis, impregnating the hungry female while she dined on him.

Or, the boy would be climbing up the stairs to do his routine. He would carefully remove the broken piece of stone and check on how the mother *dermaptera*, the mother earwig, was doing. Yes, as expected, she raised her scissors at him. The other earwigs were quick to flee, but she would not. She had her eggs to defend. Every time he checked, it was the same. He would do that day after day, over a month. That was how long the

mother earwig waited by the eggs without food, without rest. And one day, the boy saw the eggs had hatched, and the mother did not raise her scissors at him. Instead, in front of the boy's very eyes, she rolled over, showing her soft belly. The babies went crazy; they went at it. She had invited them to eat her life away. Life was absurd and violent. Life took life to pass on the species. He placed the stone back cautiously.

The boy was high on nature.

Often, the boy could be heard singing. He was enjoying how his voice traveled in the amphitheater. It was quite theatrical. He would be gesturing and acting to his own singing. It was evident the music kept flowing out easily from him.

The boy was high on his art.

The grandfather cherished the boy like that. The boy was exuberant with joy. The grandfather wished for nothing more. The boy being so genuinely happy, was the best part of his life as a grandfather. And the grandfather did everything he could to nourish that. He told the boy stories of gods, goddesses, fairies, myths, and folktales he heard a long time ago to feed the boy's imagination. The grandfather would also come up with stories. The one that the boy loved the most was inspired by the broken stone cell. They

thought it looked as if a giant had stepped on it, and the grandfather told the boy that a girl was fast asleep in the flowerbed deep below that stone cell. She used to live in the stone cell, and she was there when the giant stepped on it. She somehow managed to escape the giant's pounding foot, and she could hear a faint voice, far away, from a young boy, like the boy himself, crying and protesting, "You killed my Zally!" Anyhow, the giant's pounding made a hole in the floor, which opened up a passage to the underground. So she went down deep into the underground and found a flowerbed. She laid down in it and fell asleep to the sound of water that was running somewhere, even farther below. The grandfather told the boy, that she should be still sleeping there.

The boy had an amazingly expressive soprano voice, and he could sing and act. The grandfather would sing, too, responding to the stories that poured out from the boy. They could go on like that endlessly. They loved it. The grandfather was an okay singer and actor; the boy was a natural.

After they finished singing, the children that happened to be there would bring them the flowers, branches, or stones, that each child found had special beauty as a token of their appreciation. Adults would offer them fruits, sweets, and beverages.

It was obvious that the boy was talented and that he was passionate about singing. He was born to be a singer.

One day, the news reached the family. The city was going to invest and produce a profitable commercial complex on the site of the amphitheater. It was called "The Amphitheater Project." The city was having a group of analysts working on big data.

"I've got great news," the mother said to her son, the five-year-old boy, when he came in from the amphitheater. "Thanks to your grandfather, who really used very little money on you," she explained, "your father and I were able to save enough money to send you to a good preschool for a year. The school bus will come and pick you up every morning and drop you off in the afternoon." The boy was sad.

The boy's life quickly became overscheduled with preschool related events. He was on the bus going back and forth between one concrete box (home) and another concrete box (pre-school). The boy's parents were very committed, and the grandfather stepped down.

The grandfather had informed them, "the boy has already found his passion. Let him pursue that. He loves it, and he is talented." The boy's parents said, they did not have that kind of money. "Amphitheater singing does not make money." "But," the grandfather insisted, "it is priceless." "Exactly. It is priceless; it is worthless."

The parents wanted the boy to have a good life and tried to equip him for that. They dismissed what the grandfather had to say. Nobody wanted a big sound in a small concrete box. They used headphones, so as not to be intrusive to others.

Thus, the joy the boy found in singing was terminated. The talent would not be attended to, would not be appreciated. The grandfather tried to console himself with the idea that the boy was too young to know that he lost happiness. But the frustration in the grandfather accumulated. The thought that it was a sin to crush the boy's talent kept growing in him.

One evening after dinner, the stressed grandfather felt the urge to go to the amphitheater. "Can I take

the boy with me?” “No, he has school tomorrow. He needs to rest.” So the grandfather went to the amphitheater alone. Going there without the boy was not what he was accustomed to, and it felt strange. It signaled to him that he and the boy were moving into different stages of their lives. At the amphitheater, he noticed that the city was getting ready to level the land. More signals to him that his, and the boy’s, life was shifting. He was excluded from the boy’s life, and the boy was to be excluded from his happiness. The grandfather was sadder and more stressed than when he left home.

When he walked into the amphitheater, he started humming as he was strolling about. He could feel the depression that had nested in him alleviate, if not, dissipate. Soon he was singing. He went down the rows of stone seats, and at the bottom of the theater, he was singing away wholeheartedly. When the boy started singing, the grandfather’s body jerked in surprise. The grandfather had not noticed, but the boy had been standing beside him, waiting for the right timing, for quite a while. He had snuck out of his home. The grandfather looked at the boy with a big smile. The boy smiled back. Then, the boy broke into a solo, and a small number of people that happened to be there that night, all exploded in applause. His voice carried the small audience, a couple, and a few solitary evening breeze enjoyers, some

people who probably inhabited the ruins, into a higher dimension:

*We came from outer space
To save the human race
From lies and from corruption
From death and from destruction³*

The audience heard the grandfather join the boy; he was whispering, the “keys of life” again and again. It was ethereal.

It had been a long time since *homo sapiens* last filled the amphitheater with such air. Their passion-propelled performance was emitting so much heat that the amphitheater was experiencing a massive outbreak of *genius spirytus*. When *genius spirytus* are heated, they become active. The more heat *genius spirytus* have, the more spurred they are. If there is a human that has a thirst for the soil and a passion for art, *genius spirytus* connects with them; and *genius spirytus* flowed into the boy’s and the grandfather’s bodies. The fevered *genius spirytus* strive for the empyreal. The *genius spirytus* in the

³ The first stanza of Klaus Nomi, “Keys Of Life,” *In Concert*, RCA, Germany, 1986. Recorded live at Hurrah’s nightclub in New York City in 1979.

boy and the grandfather were scorching hot, aspiring to the sublime; they were shining like northern lights within the boy and the grandfather. The boy and the grandfather's singing kept activating more and more *genius spirytus* in the amphitheater. The tingling vibration was spreading all over the audience's bodies. They were covered with goosebumps.⁴ Yes, they were experiencing *frisson*, aesthetic chills. It was a wonderful sensation.

⁴ For *frisson* see: Mitchel Colver "Why Do Only Some People Get' Skin Orgasms' From Listening to Music?." *Conversation* May 25, 2016. <https://theconversation.com/why-do-only-some-people-get-skin-orgasms-from-listening-to-music-59719> Mitchel Colver and Amani El-Alayli, "Getting aesthetic chills from music: The connection between openness to experience and frisson," *Psychology of Music*, 2016, Vol. 44 (3) 413-427. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0305735615572358>

The girl woke up from her deep slumber below in the flowerbed feeling a massive *frisson*. Beaming in delight, she started her journey upward, singing:

*From ancient worlds I come
To see what man has done
What's fact and what is fiction
To judge the contradiction*⁵

The audience was amazed; how could the boy use so many voices. They thought it was him singing. The boy and the grandfather stood mesmerized to the girl's voice rising from below. Then, the amphitheater started vibrating, and the bottom of it, where the two stood, collapsed.

⁵ A different version, and the circulated one, of the first stanza. Nomi sang this version for his first album. On this album, Klaus Moni, not Nomi, is credited for lyrics. Klaus Nomi, "Keys Of Life," *Klaus Nomi*, RCA, Germany, 1985. That there existed two versions were brought to my attention by Andre Horn, the director, in film, *The Nomi Song* (New York: Palm Pictures, 2004).

It was the couple who were listening to the singing that reported the collapse to the police, that the semi-circular bottom, where a boy and an older man were standing had caved in, that the soil had swallowed them.

The woman is done eating. The Thai noodles from The Amphitheater were good, and she is in a good mood. A mosquito that made it through the insect repellent must have detected nutritious blood flowing in her. The mother mosquito needed human blood to nurture her eggs.⁶ Slap, the woman casually and accurately kills it. It was a reaction she did not think, and so the survival game for the mosquito, suddenly and violently, ended.

⁶ The information on mantodea, dermaptra, and the mosquito is based on 稲垣栄洋『生き物の死にざま』(草思社 2019).

“Thank you,” the woman uttered, looking at The Amphitheater, which she and her husband used almost every day. The deaths had added another source of revenue for her and her husband: the city was giving them 4%, for life, of the rents they collected from the tenants of The Amphitheater. It was ruled that the city was responsible for the deaths; the city should not have left the amphitheater open to the public. It really secured the married couple’s future.

She and her husband had no desire for another child: “A child costs too much.” “Let us enjoy our life.” Their soles stayed soiless until the day their lifespans ran out.

Fever

There is a strangeness to doctors I've met.
One is kind,
Two gave contradictory diagnosis,
And one refused to prescribe
Antibiotics.

I had a fever dream:
In my room, there is death.
I hold onto the only chrysanthemum thriving,
While roses and Betelgeuse dried out.
There is a bloodstain on my bed --
And I make a mental note to change my sheets.

I had a fever dream:
In my room, there is life.
Anxious thing lying among cerulean blue
Stars. There is viscera and gore under
All that skin. "Probability is with us"
Echoes in the room, and certitude
Is something bled all over black.

I had a fever dream:
In my room, there is love.
Love drips itself away, red
And fresh, down my thighs.
Love weights itself down, dark
And slouching, under his eyes.
But our bed is light, bright, *sunlight*.

R
August 2019

The Third Proposal of Sir John Falstaff (for Harold Bloom)

Bend to the wind in this my final fall
Bear me to your memory of what chance
Desire springs through the rites
Of my disorderly cunning
The blossoms of forgetting play no reason
But the merriment was all for all

Pleased be your eyes for my noble carriage
In high pursuit of lawful wedded rhyme
Truly this uncommon depth is grounds for
Buried buds and fumbled wiltings
Of missed chances yet hold still
My gouted fingers and purpled heart

Tear off this my masked corpulence
Beneath which jollity is still jollity
Making mine a double every time
Leaf through this many-sided pun
To find my timidity fortified by sherry
Whose courageous potation

Equal only to my sombre admiration
For you for whom no sonnet flows
Through my vanity though that you
Ought be believed and remembered
By your most high deserts till my wait
Is invalidated by your yes and is.

Lim Lee Ching
June-August 2018