

One Imperative

Issue 20



Céline Coderey

Lim Lee Ching

Ling Teo

PAYNK

R

Tan Jingliang

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Jeremy Fernando

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issue 20 a clutch of unfurling magenta peonies

cover image PAYNK

- with works by**
- Céline Coderey
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*a clutch of unfurling
magenta peonies*



Céline Coderey
smoky hope
2018

吳淞岸視賈宏聲

(循杜甫)

江舟宅上巧相遇
世紀橋畔觀紫瓣
城隍必令天際線
龍熏燎幻再盼傑



Writing the Peony

by Ling Teo

Fine-misted late spring rain stealing through
an open window
to waft the deep rose scent of a clutch of unfurling magenta
peonies
over to me
where I sit with the
polyphonies of Stabat Mater
weaving threads
of timeless supplication around me
I reach for another word, and I
write another line.

Ling Teo
Breda, June 2015



PAYNK
Last Spring

For Someone Who Cannot Let Go

by Реми Весло

Apple blossoms and laurel wreaths bloom up my arm:
To cover up that I am living scar and open wound.
When my fist closes over empty air and misses
the cheeks of endings I'd rather have, I
clutch instead 280 blinkered flashes,
Since I haven't enough jars for
365 days of the year.

Midnight air whisper-sings sweet and dear to me,
(So cold so sweet so sweet so fair)
But neon lights blind me, laugh at me, steal from me.
(She can search this whole wide world o'er,
she can never find another man like me.)

It takes courage yet to live, to die.

(To sleep, to dream)

To be brave, and to be willingly blind,
Virgil would kiss your cheeks and Homer
would have been proud – because some
weren't made to be soldiers. Some
were made historians, to stand
guard as sentinels, voyeurs of time.

So be brave, and if
You get the chance, put
on my grave a handful of peonies
And stargazer lilies

So between gravestones they can read aloud --

Sorry

Sorry

Sorry.

H 先生
Mr. H

by Tan Jingliang

1。

《不准你写》

不准你写
悲观的世界
也不准你写
虚无与绝望
因为
明明有人很爱你

《 not allowed 》

you are not allowed to write
the desolate world
nor emptiness and despair
because obviously
someone loves you very much

2。 《我以为我已经死了》

有天早上
我醒来的时候
我以为我已经死了
我把你的歌
又听了三百遍
是我疯了吧

《 i thought i was dead 》

one morning
as i woke up
i thought i was dead
i listened to your songs
another three hundred times
imust be fucking crazy

3。《可爱的你》

你会喜欢别人
也会有很多别人
也喜欢你
喜欢可爱的你
他们一定
比我可爱
一万倍
但他们一定不比我
更喜欢你
哼！

《cute》

you will fall for somebody else
and many somebody else's
will too fall for you
you who is cute
they are surely
ten thousand times
cuter than i am
but they are surely not
more in love with you than i am
hmpf！

4。《周末》

周末这回事
就像你一样
真是个
陌生的概念

《weekend》

the weekend
like you
a foreign concept

5。《窗外》

闭上眼睛
聆听窗外的街道声
每一段经过的车
都好像你的声音

《 window 》

close my eyes
listen to streets out the window
every passing car
the likeness of your voice

6。《泡菜猪肉对面的椅子》

今天有张椅子
坐在泡菜猪肉的对面
它长得很像你

我说
好可怜的饭
它在看着你
饭饭在流泪

你是我第一个
认识
也是单手吃饭的人
你说

是吗
我对椅子说
这里的音乐
让我有点紧张

《 chair opposite kimchi pork 》

there was a chair today
opposite my kimchi pork
it looked just like you

i said
poor rice
look at it, looking at you
tears rolling down its cheeks

you are the only other person
i know
who eats with one hand
you said

is that so?
i said to the chair
the music
is making me nervous

7。 《善变》

我善变？
你才善变
你闪电

《 fickle 》

i fickle?
you then fickle
you lightning

8。 《夸你》

你人又丑
又没天分
没品味
缺乏美感
唱歌又难听
眼睛又难看
睫毛很短
笑起来一点也不可爱
脾气暴躁
不，脾气温和

《 praise 》

you ugly
no talent
no taste
artless
sing badly
eyes not pretty
lashes very short
not cute at all when you smile
hot-tempered
no, i mean gentle-tempered

Flower Fires

by Setsuko Adachi

A clutch of —

Paris, 1895

The audience sat in front of a screen heard ssssssssssssssss in the darkness. Light flashed. A train appeared on the screen. The train was coming, increasing in size. The audience, they were naïve. They were new to the 2D-3D boundary trick. They ducked, screamed, got up to flee.¹ — The cinema impact represented a feature of the nineteenth century, the century of mechanization and industrialization: technical thrill was speedy and destructive.

Leningrad, 1941-

The Nazis invaded the USSR in June. Leningrad went under siege in September. Luftwaffe planes flew over the starving city releasing bombs. They came down, hissing in the air, ssssssssssssssss... The civilians ducked, screamed, ran, and died. In the first winter of the 900 days’ siege, bodies were left on streets unburied. Cannibalism was reported.

Tokyo, 1942-

The US conducted their first air raid over Tokyo in April. A seventeen-year-old Japanese youth in Komae, a village at the outskirts of Tokyo, had no doubt that the enemy couldn’t do much damage. The civilian defense system — the neighborhood association system² in the Imperial Capital was impregnable.³

¹ The Lumière brothers’ silent film, *The Arrival of a Train at La Ciotat Station* (L’Arrivée d’un train en gare de la Ciotat), fifty seconds, was one of the earliest films that was most widely seen and is claimed to be the first to be shown commercially in Paris on December 28, 1895. The film was dispatched to every continent and speedily seen in most countries within one or two years. See Mark Cousins, *The Story of Film*, Pavilion, 2013, pp. 23-24.

² The neighborhood association system - *tonarigumi* was implemented in 1940 by the Japanese government as a national mobilizing – control mechanism. Each unit was comprised of some ten houses. It was the rationing unit; it was responsible for taking care of the war-bereaved families of soldiers in their unit, and it was the civilian defense – fire and air raid drill unit.

³ 「東京発[初]空襲のこと…当時の日記から」Komae City HP, <https://www.city.komae.tokyo.jp/index.cfm/45,305,349,2101,html>

All translations from Japanese to English, unless otherwise noted, are by the author.

Unfurling

Peonies, Leningrad, August 1942

Despite the bombing and the starvation, their Philharmonic Hall was packed with people. Leningrad was the city of cultural grandeur, the home of Hermitage. The pride of civilized superior existence did everything to set the ambiance right: chandeliers were sparkling, the orchestra was all dressed in bow ties, the audience came dressed up the best they could. Speakers were set for those who could not come. And a girl in the barren city miraculously found a peony tree blossoming with magenta flowers that had not been eaten.

It was surreal, the concert. Everyone was immersed in the music. They forgot the horror of their plight. A crystal-clear silence emerged when the music ended. It intensified, then, erupted. The hall shook in the storm of applause. When a bunch of magenta peonies appeared in the midst of it — the scene was “*unbearably joyful*.”

The magenta glowed in the arms of the conductor: throbbed with the heart of Leningrad.

German soldiers heard the music through the speakers. Some were shedding tears. It was their culture, too. ⁴

Rosebud, Nogata (on the outskirts of Tokyo), summer 1943 around noon

Röslein, Röslein, Röslein rot ... Rosebud, rosebud, rosebud red...

A faint soprano leaked from a house. Her neighbors had their concerns: Is she singing the enemy’s songs? — It was Franz Schubert’s version of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe’s *Heidenröslein* — Heather Rose.⁵ Their ears could not tell German from English. Has she not heard the slogan: *Luxuries are your enemies?* ... So, Chiyo, an amateur singer, practiced in the darkness, in her bathing suit, drenched in sweat, in the house with all the shutters and windows closed, — no air raid sirens and no visitors would be great.

Music was *not* a luxury, it was a necessity. Chiyo had received a notice in the morning. She was levied with a No Child Tax. A married female at thirty without a child was useless. The emptiness of her existence in the militarist nationalist patriarchal society was painful. — Since you do not provide the country with a child, pay your fine.

⁴ See Jason Caffrey, “Shostakovich’s symphony played by a starving orchestra,” (*BBC News Magazine*, January 2, 2016. <https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-34292312>) “A bunch of flowers” was presented at the occasion, however, that it was a bunch of magenta peonies is a fictional insertion made by the author.

⁵ The translation of the poem used here is Edgar A. Bowring’s in 1853. https://germanstories.vcu.edu/goethe/heiden_dual.html

Rosebud, Aoyama (Tokyo), summer 1943 in the afternoon

<i>Knabe sprach: "Ich breche dich, Röslein auf der Heiden."</i>	Said the boy, "I'll now pick thee, Heathrose fair and tender!"
<i>Röslein sprach: "Ich steche dich, Daß du ewig denkst an mich, Und ich will's nicht leiden."</i>	Said the rosebud, "I'll prick thee, So that thou'lt remember me, Ne'er will I surrender

Singing never felt better. Her whole being had captured the never surrendering rosebud. The song was hers. Chiyo was euphoric. She knew she had reached a higher level of intellect in creative imaginative expression. It took her a long time, a lot of effort, it was complex.

"*Sehr gut!* — Very good!" Eta cried out, very pleased. Chiyo was unfurling.

Eta Harich-Schneider was a renowned Harpsichordist in exile, who was stranded in Tokyo for the entire Pacific war. She came to Tokyo in the spring of 1941, then in the summer of that same year, the USSR-Germany war broke-out, and in the winter, Japan bombed Pearl Harbor. Eta fled Berlin because she was dismissed from her professorship at the *Berlin Hochschule für Musik* when she refused to join the Nazi party.⁶

Fate filled Eta and Chiyo, the two critically minded women, with the desire to exercise, to sharpen the sophisticated sensitivity, or sensibility, for sound and mind to rise above the destructive situation. By the third year of WWII in the Pacific, their need to fight their war was urgent: Chiyo went for lessons from Eta almost every day. Eta hosted a salon — a private chamber music concert — every week. For the salon, every effort was made to do it right. Chiyo not only sang but was held responsible for preparing and maintaining the right ambiance. Eta channeled her high expectation for sophisticated ears: the guests had to have critical minds that understood the philosophical thrill as poets. Eta would not invite a well-known musician if she thought that the person did not understand poetry.

⁶ Eta Harich-Schneider (1897-1986), Source: Baker's Biographical Dictionary of 20th Century Classical Musicians (1997), *Bach Cantatas Website*, <http://www.bach-cantatas.com/Bio/Harich-Eta.htm>

Wisteria, Early May 1945

A beautiful blue sky spread over her head. Chiyo sat on a chair, anxiety-ridden, looking at the wisteria in full bloom. These days, on a bright sky day like this, the US B29s never failed to appear. Quite recently, she extinguished the bombs that landed around her house all by herself — her husband had been drafted. It was only the other day, when she watched a neighboring house covered in raging flames from the roof and thought: This is it, I am dying.

The phone rang. It was Eta. "Come, please, immediately before the air raid siren inhibits you from reaching here." Eta said she was having a very special concert that afternoon. Chiyo with music sheets in her arms quickly headed for Eta's.

The program consisted of four short pieces. *Wigenlied*, a lullaby, by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, another *Wigenlied* by Carl Maria von Weber, *Frühlingsglaube* (Faith in Spring) by Franz Schubert, and *Heidenröslein* (Heather Rose) another by Franz Schubert. Eta's instruction was not to worry about making mistakes or singing well. She wanted her to sing the songs with the utmost genuine feeling.

The air raid siren went off and was lifted. Soon after, three cars halted at the door. The German ambassador, high ranking officials, and their wives came in. Nobody said anything, no greetings. Each one went straight to a seat. Not a smile from the familiar faces. The room became tense. Chiyo quickly was beside herself.

<i>Und der wilde Knabe brach 's Röslein auf der Heiden; Röslein wehrte sich und stach, Half ihm doch kein Weh und Ach, Mußt' es eben leiden. Röslein, Röslein, Röslein rot, Röslein auf der Heiden.</i>	Now the cruel boy must pick Heathrose fair and tender; Rosebud did her best to prick,— Vain 'twas 'gainst her fate to kick— She must needs surrender. Rosebud, rosebud, rosebud red, Heathrose fair and tender!
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"*Gut* — good," she heard Eta say in a small voice, which brought her back to herself and into the intense silence. It was as if everything else had vanished and only this room existed. The guests sat wordless, some with tears in their eyes. The energy, the passion that words fail to convey, filled the air. Chiyo was transfixed; the guests were gone with the end of music.

Chiyo did not know. The news was not released yet: Nazis Germany had lost.



Michael Kearney
Magenta Bound (I)

Magenta Bound (S)

by The Symbolic Order

Michael Kearney — Guitars & Bass
Durnin Martin — Guitar & Drums

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zue6rbpXv0o>

Magenta Bound (T)

The Symbolic Order, by Michael Kearney

Splash, Splash – “*Venī Intrā, Venī Intrā!!*”
“*Grātiās Tibi Agō, Grātiās Tibi Agō*” – Splosh, Splosh!!
Shuplosh, Shuplosh – “*Nihil Est, Nihil Est!!*”
“*De Adventu Tuo Tibi Grātulor.*”

With a slap and a whimper,
the hysterical passage's
end is marked,
and with that end,
upon the quest for intimacy we embark.

Spinning in two directions –
Ní thuigim –
Twisting in three dimensions –
Ní thuigim –
Bound in a framework
not of our making;
we hover in nothingness.

With a tear and a sob,
we plunge
through edgeless dark,
falling, yet caught,
in a viscous void.

Spinning in two directions –
Ní thuigim –
Twisting in three dimensions –
Ní thuigim –
Bound in a framework
not of our making;
we hover in nothingness.

Solace is an image of a self
formed through the illusions of an Other.

Optimum iter tibi opto!!

(I would like to thank Céline Coderey for her help with the Latin – so kind, so patient.)

Let Us Part I: Her Conversations with the Scenery

by Khairi Danish

*an ever-open green, so bare and clean
a bloom in Spring, but arthritic branches
rest gently upwards from her windowsill*

*drooping flowers dangling, with the weight of
rapid cadence of winds, brutally soft
melodies pretending — her hands shaking*

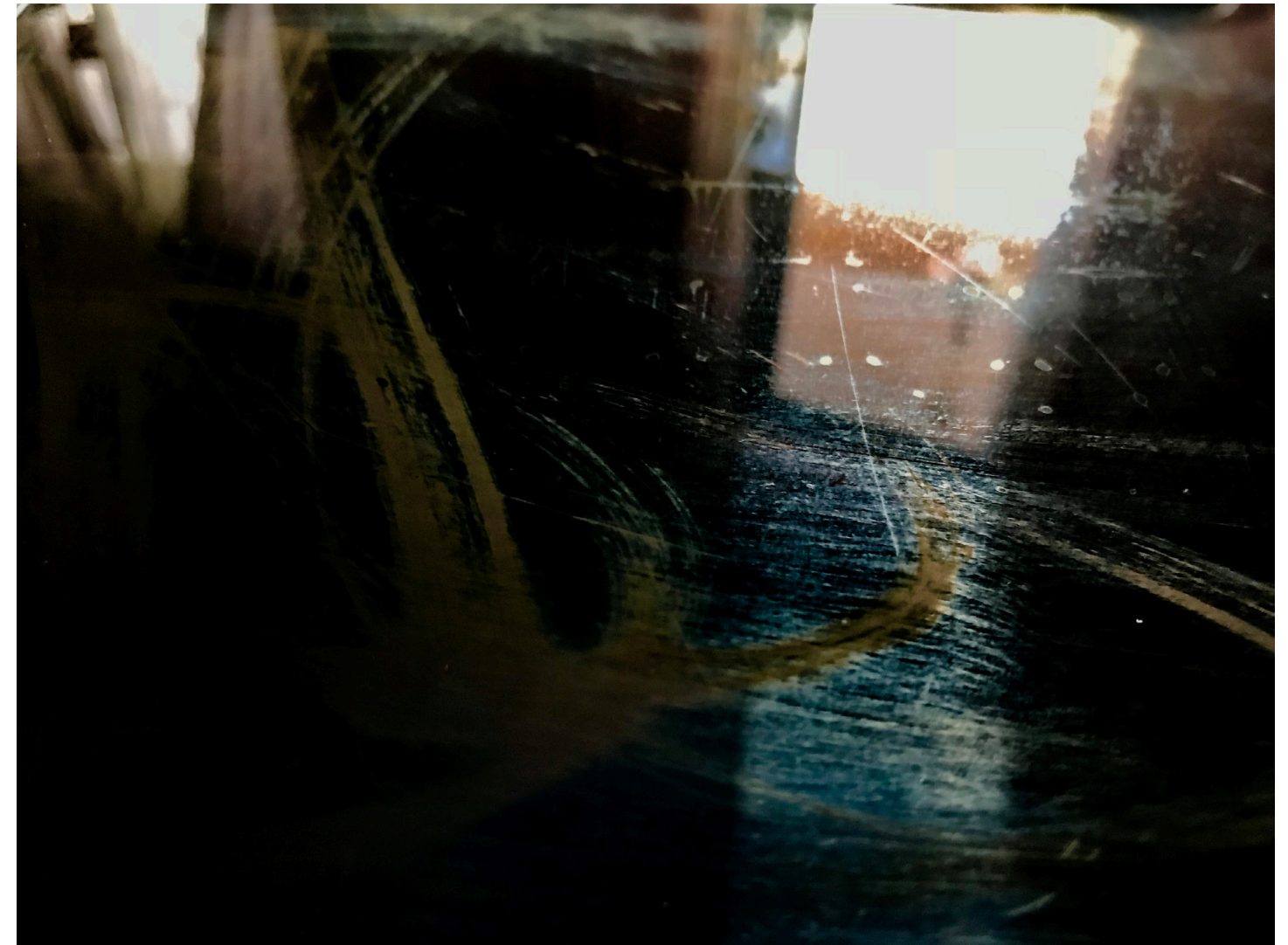
—

*these disguised hands desperately peeling
the diamond ring by the bedside table
in oriental vases perceiving
her fourth finger taps, sways; wrapped in fables*

—

*“her handheld catharsis poised pathetic
on softness of photographs, rain-sodden
from eyes barely open; **don't tell a soul**”*

“seemingly so, she's something of saddened.”



Jeremy Fernando
l'e ücriture d'Helios
2017

Let Us Part II: Bridal Bouquets in the Southern Weather

by Khairi Danish

*while dreaming of dawns after dark this dusk
this summer dawn draws a sickly sad drunk
bloomed, with hearts hardened by Eastern feelings
withered, with her, waned in a world worn*

*the macabre morbid fascination
of king of all queens akin to his skin
shamefully flees West, she hides in Pale Pink
whose veil wounded, kindred, comforting*

*a boy barely older, body broken
like Continents lips of younger women
caresses North of sensitive centre
bitterest of saliva, heart of rue
bruised unbeknownst to read all the good books
strangled with a tattered prose of **I Do's**:*

“Till’ Death, Us Depart”

*“South?” He asked.
“South.” She said. “Just don’t react when I’ve lost you in this sodden
weather.”*

the languages which whisper in my ear

by Jeremy Fernando

My two grand-mothers
who both speak a language of the same name
not only differently, but
like different languages
sharing the same name.
A little like I can only write this
in a language that I can never call mine
that will never call me hers.
A language which seems to whisper to me —
like a silk brush, whistling through my hair;
telling me things, saying words,
that escape my inexperienced ears.

One of my grand-mothers — she murmurs. The other,
one could say — whispers a little less. But perhaps,
it is simply the sound of their languages. Or, the way
in which they both pronounce their words — the word —
of love.

After all, there is no reason for which
love must be pronounced in the same way.
Perhaps it is never pronounced, or announced,
but comes to us — to those who listen —
only in a whisper.

If we only listen closely.

And, where all is connected to a thread
— from thread to needle —
of a sound. The sound of love,
perhaps heard only by,
or only in, my ears.

— Jeremy Fernando, translated by Céline Coderey

Note

In the French, *la langue* could mean both *language* and *tongue*. Both senses are in play here whenever you read either *language* or *languages*.

les langues qui chuchotent dans mon oreille

by Jeremy Fernando

Mes deux grand-mères
celles qui parlent toutes les deux une langue du même nom
non seulement différemment, mais
comme des langues différentes
partageant le même nom.
Un peu comme je peux seulement écrire ceci
dans une langue que je ne peux jamais appeler la mienne
qui ne m'appellera jamais la sienne.
Une langue qui semble me chuchoter —
comme une brosse en soie, sifflant dans mes cheveux ;
en me disant des choses, en disant des mots,
qui échappe à mes oreilles inexpérimentées.

L'une de mes grand-mères — elle murmure. L'autre,
on pourrait dire — chuchote un peu moins. Mais peut-être,
c'est simplement le son de leurs langues. Ou, la façon
dont elles prononcent toutes les deux leurs mots — le mot —
de l'amour.

Après tout, il n'y a pas de raison pour laquelle
l'amour doit être prononcé de la même manière.
Peut-être qu'il n'est jamais prononcé, ou annoncé,
mais vient à nous — à celui qui écoute —
seulement dans un chuchotement.

Si nous écoutons seulement attentivement.

Et, où tout tient à un fil
— de fil en aiguille —
d'un son. Le son d'amour,
peut-être entendu seulement par,
ou seulement dans, mes oreilles.

— Jeremy Fernando

One Imperative

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