

Under Heaven, Winds*

Jay G. Ying

In the beginning the first line drawn is all that could be lost. A tree was once broken into—by a masculine and a feminine. Or what broke was a chest, each ring the same stencil of circle in circles. *Nothing in that draw*. Peel back a layer then another until a heart is left: the heartwood carved out with the kitchen knife—sweet murdered already.

No blame. The fish in the tanks are under our control—by extension the oceans too. Take something deep and wet, your wounds, a feeling that there are emotions deeper than a trench-coat and slip my arms inside. Worn together, we fit like seams kneaded through the poplin: in out in. That motion is a code, is the second, are coordinates.

Temptations present themselves in thirds. We all know falling so love should be no different.

This time, no fish. The lake is dead, chipped by the wake of our boat. Lazily, a drunk crack appears to sound the lightning fumbling, stopping at points wondering if it forgot to bring thunder (turn off gas, lock doors etc...) Inside a tree or the study this weather seeks shelter. It is late now and the Circle Line has just rounded on its kinks. Fourth includes everything just under heaven, winds as tall as a minaret, spires, the short end of a blunt cross conducting.

Hidden lines: a melon covered with willow leaves, left lopsided on the table like a life-raft between us. *Eat. Before it spoils*—I add hastily, aware of not wanting to rush you—but know this, the fifth is inside waiting, pale and consumptive. *So consume it.*

Blame no-one for the sixth. The pier will carry on, and before long loathing will loathe itself, and be wiped away like any old thing that runs underground. When a man has withdrawn from the world, draw out everything that is missing. Carbon can be used to date itself. The coins will eat themselves: head through to tails, soot through nude fire will blend like ribbons lost in the covers. At the end a mother is always right: she knows of marriage, the way to open an envelope without tearing its bill, shapes the clouds can mean most of all.

*Taken from *Thirty Hexagrams More*, a continuation of a prose-poem series I started from my reading of the *I Ching, Book of Changes*: a Chinese guide to geomantic divination and cosmic principals, with each hexagram consisting of six lines broken or unbroken to represent Yin or Yang.

This poem is based on Hexagram forty-four (䷗)—the Gòu or Coming to Meet, representing ‘*principle of darkness, after having been eliminated, furtively and unexpectedly obtrudes again from within and below, ascendant again. Of its own accord the female principle comes to meet the male. It is unfavourable and dangerous.*’