



Poetry

Group 4

Warm Moon

Chinese International School, Li, Adele – 15

*you listened as the grown-ups watched the news.
tales of deceit; rote injustice;
and your home froze over
in this cold cold age of guile.
my dear; come, sit. warm
your hands in mine as I tell you a story.
let me thaw your frost-bitten heart
with tales
of the Great Justice Pao.*

I

They say his hands were callused,
wizened with life. Deep recesses
carrying memories of himself
(*bao zheng, twelve, ambitious scholar son*)
climbing the days to age twenty-nine.
Imperial scholar, at last!

II

They admired him for
his sense of family;
the man was a son before he
was a judge.
Thirty-five, heavy with
filial piety,
his tear ducts carrying the weight of
his return home
(*hefei, luzhou, ageing folk*).
Carrying his parents' bittersweet
welcome to the afterworld.

III

Now, in the courtroom
once again,
his ears were tuned
to the voice of the people.
Fourty years young, exerting
reform after reform
with no machination, no hesitation
(*as clean and clear as the sky*).

It was cold when
Li Chen bowed before him,
bitter when
his nephew confessed his crimes,
so Pao rose higher, virtuous fire,
(they say he smashed down his gravel.)

IV

By fifty his eyes were piercing,
but blind to exaltation.
So when the rotting sun sank into the sea,
and the gloaming sky shone black,
they say he was judge to the mighty gods.

It was night when
Feng Meng killed Hou Yi,
dark when
the Empress was stolen away,
so Pao stood bright, a beacon of light
(they say he smashed down his gravel.)

∞

He was the universe and more.
The unmovable moon,
the sharp spires of constellations,
earth's certain orbit around the sun.

Ageless, timeless
(they say he transcended humankind).

The moon in his forehead held
the earth on its axis,
crescent; incandescent;
nestled in his dark night of skin.

Glinting without the company of come-hither
people, emperors, gods,
lighting his eyes to see every being
as equal.

Now, in bloodlines of
the sedulous Hong Kong patriarch,
behind TV screens buzzing in convivial warmth,
he waits, guileless,
for you to see that his moon has not dimmed.

Dichotomy

German Swiss International School, Tse, Chloe – 15

Every impasse is a rite of passage:
Suffering, and the success that tails it.
Reigning Gods were once mere mortals:
Humility, and the power that hails it.

Revered Him, of the cyan sky
resolute among whispers of crime,
behind the façade
of obfuscated truths
and effortless lies.
Revered Him, of the radiant night
stalwart guardian of nocturnal sight
amidst the stealth
of creeping unease
and writhing disease.

Afflicted are the officials, the civil servants,
sick faces red in fits of fiery rage
blind with greed and deaf to pleas
people prostrated, servants slandered
no choice left but to go down under.

The head bows:
the bow sinks
into obscured black ink.

The lamp perches
steady on the lone ship. Divinity
hovers, on its own,
above the tumult
of waves roiling.
It comes. It goes.
It rests, and rows
across the throes
of the night stained bold
Its glow, all alone
speaks brighter than
the sovereign's throne,
shining true, and through
obscuring fog, birthing anew:

the child, the seed, the foal
the timeless thing with lustrous feathers—
reborn in depths of the fire, the coal,
It perches steady atop the soul;
nocturnal Sun warming the cold
of discomfort, insecurity,
and unease—driven riots;

Order, It seeks, among the entropy of the universe,
rife with disorder and an absent border
domains expanding, particles colliding,
exploding from the barrel of celestial mortar
relentlessly preying upon pieces of fodder
charred cinder remnants of crucified symbiosis:
feeding upon fear, annihilating justice.

As I tilt my head up today I see the remnants
of a persisting war, the haze
of the hubris,
reaching far beyond the surface
of my window, to the unexplored realms of the abyss—
we look up and recount tales of how
You, our God, the axis of madness
stilling the wild cyclone of turbulence,
delving in after a keen eye has noticed
exquisite inkstones that hid the darkness
of bribery, veiled nepotism that
dulled the spark of the emperor's palace,
You are the lone star in our polluted night sky
our God that witnesses; you're one of us, transcended
yet the world will not remain in stasis.

What comes out of this ancient mess
won't coalesce into staggering success
nor suppress inevitable distress.
But what we can emulate, what we can do best
we will settle, for nothing less: above
us, waxing, above us, waning. A relic, engraved.
A confident stroke, from the chisel
carved deeply, into white marble;
a fine imprint, of bone—white chalk
powdered gently, on the lead block

until then:

Do not praise, and do not mock
heads hung high on the chopping block—
resulting in salvation, a life unlocked
freed from the tick-tock of broken clocks
or a forced stop, a steady walk
slowed by time grinding to a halt.

What we're seeing will amount to nothing
for anything, everything never persists.
Not supremacy, nor strength.
Not inferiority, nor weakness:
The dragon only concedes to unfurling
timelines, continuous cycles, evolving
into the ouroboros—
retracing steps, repeating history.
Nothing betrays the balance, belies the shifting
of dynamics in Chatelier's equilibrium. Herein lies
the harmony,
the dichotomy. The Yin
and the Yang.
The Moon reflecting
off the Sun, the Night bleeding
to-Day. The Past morphing,
transforming
that persisting Present.