

CHICAGO REVIEW

Poems from Tiananmen Square

Author(s): Anonymous and Mike O'Connor

Source: *Chicago Review*, Vol. 39, No. 3/4, A North Pacific Rim Reader (1993), pp. 284-287

Published by: Chicago Review

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25305772>

Accessed: 14-06-2017 21:06 UTC

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://about.jstor.org/terms>



Chicago Review is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Chicago Review*

Anonymous

Poems from Tiananmen Square

The following poems are from a group written by anonymous Chinese poets involved in the Pro-Democracy Movement in China in the spring of 1989. The poems were posted around Tiananmen Square at the time leading up to the crushing of the movement by the military. The poems were gathered from the Square and faxed to Hong Kong and then to Taiwan, where they were published in the *China Times*. A leading Taiwan poet then sought out foreign translators—Korean, Japanese, German, French, and American—for translation into their respective languages.

Mad Woman

All day long hidden in the box called China
 washing diapers for thousands of years
Now I spread apart my own bones and flesh
beat them into a metal knife slash the disgusting faces
 of this world
the disgusting faces of these men.

China a father who killed his own sons
and this night, molested his daughters China China
a living coffin in which I have been buried
 for a thousand years
My breasts have become my own tomb
the whole length of my body grown over with lichen and moss.

Corpses overflow this nation My naked body soaks in
the pus and blood flowing thick on the Yellow and
 Yangtze Rivers for thousands of years

They cannot wash white my skin
I lie in bed weeping and caressing myself, abusing myself
China These proper and respectable men always disappoint me.

In thousands of years only I, one person, have climbed
out of this living coffin
abandoning the pervading boredom and death smashing
the darkness

My black eyes black hair black-colored skirt and blouse
black-feet and black, black soul
only my gloves are white
This one pair of white gloves can be enough to kill our father.

I am an hysterical Chinese woman
The first mad woman but so what
In the midnight hour I run away from home
Casting off my own husband
but so what.

I am a mad woman not a stitch of clothing on
standing in a treetop, searching for the sun
At the places where men vote I am the opposing ballot
But so what.

Throughout the land the nation's farmers
throughout the land the nation's small-town people
throughout the land the nation's bureaucrats
have come from innumerable wars
from thousands of years of history and the time to do something
yet they have not been rescued
At the intersection of death in the earth's anatomy
they have gone from slavery to slavery
Their arms, once wrenched counter-clockwise, finally drop
like roll-curtains
and change into plants.

Newspapers founded on lies
and the Great Wall founded on ashes are the same
Refined and gentle scholars old men reluctant to be buried
and the insouciant, I-don't-give-a-damn young men are the same
Famous poets squatting in public johns and the computer kids
 are the same
Tea houses, spread out and numerous as stars, and the offices
 of research institutes are the same
I hate everything Confucius Zhuangzi Stalin Marx
They make me sick I want to swallow all falsehood and crime
I died I took flight and couldn't race toward
 the moon of immortality
The filthy China night body tattooed with stars
like an adulterous man lies face downward on my shoulders
humiliating my lover I want to kill you
From now on you can never again pollute my body
I am not a mad woman I am a human being I am willing
 to suffer the punishment.

Tonight Martial Law Was Imposed

—But the people will still turn
 a brand-new page of history

Under the republican sky
a hazy moon
under the republican sky
the fallen night
but it is no longer dark
the sun has shone for twenty centuries
though I still feel cold
a fish walking across the deck of a ship
is played such a good joke by the sailors
they are shooting right at me
but I suddenly spin round
use my body and soul like shrapnel to threaten them
this land of silence is sufficient to destroy me
I don't want to be reborn
the moon with an easy gesture
cuts me in half

my skull is filled with ammunition
moving gradually nearer the horizon
I turn my body and rise from bed
but hear underfoot men
still adrift in sleep
you come out
I come out
he, she also come out
is it possible, people of the republic,
that the night air of martial law is infused with fragrance
your blood flows in proud veins
today, you hold your future in your hands
sprinkles of rain, then there is oasis
the hope of everyone in the nation
this lump of yellow earth is my first concern
this lump of yellow earth is my last bed
tonight, I entreat you to lie face down
in this Square
may the frivolous ship of martial law
slide over my youthful shoulders as over fine sand
tomorrow morning you will see a brand-new sun
tomorrow your fighting spirit will be greater
here in my heart and
there, over your heads
Freedom and Democracy,
that bright flag, will higher and higher wave.

Words for Xn

There is no sun in this city
Black night fattens the maggots and worms
One body in rigor mortis struggles to right itself
As if intending to prop up the sky here
The lucky ones are the mice the unfortunate people are stones
Between the lucky and the unfortunate
Between the stones and the mice
Only you can understand what it means.

Translated from Chinese by Mike O'Connor