

Pui Ying Wong – Three Poems

The Emptying Hour

The day passes
the night passes & before long
the year & years
we rise from the bed
you buttoning your shirt
me glancing at the window
bits of light tossed to the dusk
branches like labyrinths
the sleepwalker treads
the rumpled bed
proving our bodies
thrashed as if swimming
palm in palm out
the rain furious like cicadas
cries in the willows
in the shambles of thicket
their songs too die
passing like day
passing like night
while we outgrow all the years
no rain now & the barks are brittle
hardly any sap left
only then you come back
as if from some foreign terrain
though you unbutton your shirt
I no longer understand
your words so weighty
so unlike when
our bodies were entwined

Lower Manhattan

Soon visitors
to the World Trade Center
can kill their drinks
in the new bar
overlooking the sprawling city,

bejeweled, any night of the year.
An exaggeration to claim
that on the 101st floor,
through floor-to-ceiling glass
one sees

far as the earth's curvature.
But in the evening
of the anniversary, when
the twin towers hurl
their blue shadows
on absence, I wonder
where they are

if not crouching on horizon's
firing line,
in torn clouds
and in the rumbling air.
The designer
of the restaurant says
from here you see nothing.

Red Poppies in Auvillar

The poppies enclosed in their buds tremble
when we walk past, inside, a flame.
Roadside roses droop from their own weight,
extravagant beauty but we are greedy for more.
I remember what Francoise said in her email
after the bombing: "what else can we do
but work for peace, friendship, beauty."

Pui Ying Wong was born in Hong Kong. She is the author of two full-length books of poetry: *An Emigrant's Winter* (Glass Lyre Press, 2016) and *Yellow Plum Season* (New York Quarterly Books, 2010)—along with two chapbooks. She has poems published and forthcoming in *Prairie Schooner*, *Ploughshares*, *Atlanta Review*, *The Southampton Review*, *Plume Poetry Journal*, *The New York Times*, *Valparaiso Poetry Review*, among others. She is a book reviewer for Cervena Barva Press in Somerville, MA. She lives in Cambridge, MA with her husband, the poet Tim Suermondt