

## Wild Pheasant

Wang Ping

Venus points to the mid-sky moon  
My path is drenched with silvery dew  
A wild pheasant calls from a blue house terrace  
Red are my lips, dark is love

Painted phoenix cannot fly  
Pain in my heart has no tongue  
I was daughter of yellow earth  
You were son of mountains and ravines  
Two small children with bowl-cut hairdos  
We played without shame or suspicion  
At 20, Mother opened my face with silk thread  
A red sedan carried me to your new cave  
Three nights after, you set off for the coast  
I grabbed your sleeves, hugged your neck  
Why did you bother to marry if you had to leave so soon  
You dragged your feet, two steps forward three steps back  
Bride and groom, three days new  
How our tears broke like partridge eggs

Venus sinks to the west, leaning on the moon  
My path makes no sound under wet moss  
A wild pheasant calls from a blue house window  
Come, my angels, rest your souls at my perfumed feet

Pairs of toads leap in the spring  
Our love song echoes ravine to ravine  
At the end of the road, I took out my needle  
And sewed my heart into your shirt  
Go, my lover, don't look back  
If you're hungry, there's bread in the sack  
Heat your meals and cover your belly  
Don't forget your bride, don't pick flowers along the road  
I'll plough the fields, care for our parents  
My door will be locked till you return  
With a cartful of grain

Venus shines--lighthouse for stars  
Along my path, shadows scurry in dim alleys  
A wild pheasant calls from blue house eaves  
Short is my skirt, tender as my scented sleeves

Terraces are ploughed by buffaloes  
This world is seeded with sorrow  
My love, you're a mud ox sunk in the sea  
Nothing returns since you left me  
I call heaven and earth  
But who will hear who will see  
Only tears drip from a crushed heart  
A lone shadow hovers over the well

Venus weeps on the blue house roof  
At dawn my path crowds with sleepless souls  
A pheasant calls under the Old White Star  
Long is my hair, tangled love in the teeth of fate

Ten thousand geese fly to north  
Ten thousand letters wait for a home  
Once mating, Mandarin ducks never part  
My herd boy, six years is too long without you  
Some rule with slogans, some reign with commercials  
But who will give back my husband  
Let us raise the young, grow old in peace  
Roaming from city to city  
I ask your name to women, paint your face to thousands of men  
Whatever happened, I must find you  
Alive, I'll drag you to Mother's knees  
Our five-year-old son you've never seen  
Dead, I'll take your bones in cloth, rest them  
Next to your father, wine and incense to light your path

The moon has completed her journey  
From darkness to darkness I linger  
A wild pheasant calls with a splintered throat  
Gold Star of Venus, please shine your light on my path

I'm a pheasant, a spittoon filled with cigarette butts  
My flesh rots beneath powder and rouge  
But the fire has never died in my temple  
Love is there if you see it—  
Dewdrops of faith bejeweling its upturned eaves

Do not move  
Let birds stir in their nests  
Let pheasants—fairies from this tattered earth  
Carry the sun in our beaks

\* pheasant and others are names for prostitutes. A blue house is term for a brothel in ancient times.