

FAN Sin Piu**Afternoon Anxieties**

Two o'clock weather report: fine
light southerlies showers possible
late in the day worsening conditions
expected for the weekend. You don't say.
After a big lunch
my spirits flutter like a skirt
on the line mimic a shadow
on scorching concrete
In the blanks of the meeting minutes
sketching a few lines of verse transcribing
to the back of a xeroxed tax return
Work as usual all afternoon, except
a few meditations left in
the drawer, and pondering
a moment
as is only natural
office politics, the money market, and emigration

Translated by Ian Chapman

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FAN Sin Piu

Nostalgia: Imagining a future 1993 in the year 1993

Odds-on bet for the new-season's style:
hark the bloom of a classical revival

A pot of Twinings, English as can be
white egg-shell china, cloud and mist
is it autumn outside the tea-tinted glass?
The maid's skirt, Paganini's pathos
SCMP to the right
exquisite whirlpool swirling to the left, effecting
a milky florescent change of hue
At home thinking of family
no heart to face the world news alone
a neglected husband mopes after
children and southern hemisphere summer holidays
So turning to the financial pages, sipping
the last glow of glorious spring

How I'd like to stay for another viewing
As the curtain falls on these
standing-room-only times of tumult
lingering nostalgia

Translated by Ian Chapman

Since the early 1980s, when the Sino-British negotiations over Hong Kong started, the territory has seen a continuous tide of emigration. Instead of the whole family leaving Hong Kong together, the man, as bread-winner, often stays behind while his wife and children fulfil the residency requirements of their country of destination. Such 'wifeless' husbands are referred to in local parlance as 'astronauts' 太空人.

SCMP: *South China Morning Post*, Hong Kong's main English-language daily.

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FAN Sin Piu**Passing My Father's Old Shop**

Outside a demolition site
the chiropractor squatting on his low bench
still remains, the couple selling
papers magazines some say once dope
still remain, the telephone exchange over the road
its grey walls however decrepit
still remains only that old
scavenging dog—roaming across
to the cooked food market up the street—
is gone, only the clickety-clack of the abacus
the clunk of mortar and pestle are gone,
the acrid smell of decoction gone
the sickly sweet sultanas, candied dates, figs
the ginseng and dried seahorse skeletons beneath
the glass counter gone, the neat rows of drawers
on the wall, the medicines they stowed,
the hale years of their keeper are all gone
Walking past my father's old shop
I discovered my youth had long since disappeared

Only the worksite's veil of dust
and a flurry of wind-borne emotions
for an instant still remain

Translated by Ian Chapman

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YAU Leung 邱良

Happy Valley, 1995.

The Metropolis: Visual Research into Contemporary Hong Kong 1990-1996.

FAN Sin Piu**I Walked Beneath A Light**

A light still shining
some kids still at their game
The light is an upstairs classroom:
on the darkened court
only the thump of the ball
Skirting beyond the wire fence
I gaze up at the classroom
guessing who might be cramming away
no, embracing his sweetheart
probing the heat of night, or
puffing in a huddle on pallid cigarettes
with teacher not round
youth's indomitable curiosity
stealthily spreads its tendrils.
Or no one at all.
Or perhaps
a graduate of ten years
untangled an instant from a different jungle
back to sit a while
hear the bounce of a basketball
savour some adolescent obscenities
oblivious of the dusk
fading to night. I walked beneath a light
and stopped to look a while.

Translated by Ian Chapman

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YI Chiu Kwan 爾超軍
My School . . . , 1994.
Silver print, 32 x 48 cm.
Contemporary Hong Kong Art Biennial Exhibition 1994.