

Sleep to Dream/Soy yu Mong/Shui yu Meng

When you think about dreams you dream more, remember more. You are more between worlds. There are more worlds in you.

Am I god in these worlds within? Are such worlds full of gods? And if so, whose gods? Mine that I dream them? Are dreamt worlds already known? They depend on the world before, behind them. Do they have life otherwise? In dreams are we in some story older than us, bigger than us?

A dream is a line, not quite of thought. Still rolling forward, broken, blurring from focus. The line of a dream is like a plot, a vision of motion. A storyline. But not tested. It has no air. It unravels the day in its vacuum of action. The day folds it in after. That folding in and out, of self in world and world in self, is a rhythm which makes us, makes us who we are.

I go through the door. But the glass stops me. I am through. I am stuck. In motion. Arrested.

Waking sees the logic of its lines as ink on the blank of the unwritten page, the proper writing. Waking binds into a unity all the voices I am, their disagreements. Dreaming collects blind turns that are known and couldn't have been. Dreaming blurs. What we remember from dreams is unconnected scribble, voices lost to sense, voices which leave us wondering which of our selves has misunderstood the other. We can turn that all upside down, can't we? But whether the waking misunderstands the dreaming self, or whether the opposite is true, whatever mutual incomprehension divides and unites these selves of ours, they remain foreign to each other. The rhythm of crossings, the rhythm of this border between selves is a mystery. A mystery of daily life, everyone's. Dreaming and waking: both sides distract us from the mystery. It is the mystery of a door we never remember but go through every day.

To dream is to wish, is to risk, to command again at the expense of

certain familiar controls. To fall into these worlds which make themselves, to fall asleep, we are taken by way of an irretrievable moment. A moment of throwing doors open, a coming and going. Once in, there was no world before that. I can only say this now, from here, from the side which waking declares black ink on bright paper. And getting there?

You were on a particular track. You lost attention. It dissolves. Faith. We risk the unity of being. Regularly, rhythmically. That risk is the model of devotions. There is a mystery of wishes into which we commend the spirit. Whenever the switch is flicked. Light into dimness. Who can say I throw the switch myself? Everything is thrown. All accept the sighted blindness of the self. Heraclitus said:

A man in the night kindles a light for himself when his vision is extinguished; living, he is in contact with the dead, when asleep, and with the sleeper, when awake.

Falling asleep is that moment of forgetting from which we measure our lapses. It is the model of all of our failures to come to a beginning. In dreams we only are but we act. This entry into the unknown is ours and no one else's. This is a unique moment of emergence. Merleau-Ponty writes of this shift:

There is a moment when sleep 'comes', settling on this imitation of itself which I have been offering to it, and I succeed in becoming what I was trying to be: an unseeing and almost unthinking mass, riveted to a point in space and in the world henceforth only through the anonymous alertness of the senses. It is true that this last link makes waking up a possibility: through these half-open doors things will return or the sleeper will come back into the world... The body's role is to ensure this metamorphosis. It transforms ideas into things and my mimicry of sleep into real sleep.

Settle with one wish. Counting breaths. Counting higher and higher. Conquest or the rights of a future. Up over the hill and there in the grass where the sky takes aim... face up for it - wishing on, falling back... A kind of essence of death is always on the horizon of thinking; more to the point, there is a dream essence not on the horizon but which envelops me from within my waking. Waking we only act. We don't get to star.

Falling asleep is approached then by way of an inverted view which consciousness provides, as a kind of waking: a waking to a strange self, to a half knowledge. We may speak too of falling awake. One never knows whether or where or how one wakes. Witness Po Chu-I's account:

On horseback asleep

It was a long ride, we were still far from the inn;
My eyelids weighed; for a moment I drowsed.
Under my right arm still the whip;
In my left hand the reins now loose.
I came back suddenly and would have asked...
'One hundred paces since you fell asleep.'
The body and soul had swapped for that while;
What was slow, what was fast, had reversed.
My horse had taken me through long ages.
It's true when the wise men say
'One hundred years: a moment of sleep.'

Falling asleep cannot be remembered. There is something irreversible in this journey, once begun. Dreaming can be remembered and waking can be remembered. At least the waking side of waking - *I remember what woke me* - remains available to the waking mind. This border is the mirror of mysteries such as we face in finding irretrievable sources: a dreamtime or any before of ideas. Whose dream is it and who belongs to it? The paradox of the apparent passivity of the dreamer is in her/his omnipotence: s/he gets what s/he wants. Waking sees this lack of logic.

The door is a wall. Is a door. Glass, brick, some poisonous light. Confusion of solidity, abstraction. On the other side: everything, nothing, more of the same. The unknown but we know. The unknowable. We wink. Site of a disappearance. The free world over there on the other side. The real but it's not. The cave and the shadows; the blinding, the light.

Once over and the door is gone. Or I forget to look for it. Forget I came, I'm here. Forget it. I see through the wall. I see myself knocking. A

drift of snow. See nothing. See it all. Down in the narrowing cone of the past the page yellows like the end of a tunnel receding.

A poem buried with a man. The depth of winter. The poem written in a death camp. By one whom the fascists have enslaved, tormented. Written in the dark because the guards have taken the light. How many poems like that? In *Seventh Eclogue*, Miklos Radnoti writes of the moment when sleep comes to the prisoners: 'In that moment the prison camp starts home'. He imagines each returning to the place from which the war has taken him. For each man dreaming there is a miracle in which the possibility is realised: that the bombs missed his house, that his family survived, that there is still a homeland to which to return:

the mind alone – knows the tautness of the wire.
Do you see, dearest, imagination here can free itself only this way.
By dreaming, that beautiful liberator, our broken bodies are
unleashed,
in that moment the prison camp starts home!
In rags, heads shaved, snoring, the prisoners fly
from Serbia's blind heights to the hiding homelands.
The *hiding* homelands? O *is* our home still there?
Maybe no bomb touched it? Might it *be*, as when we were drafted?
The one groaning on my right, the one sprawling on my left, will they
return home?
Tell me, *is* there still a homeland where this hexameter will be
understood?

The poem has to be dug up. Prised out of the earth in everything. The frozen earth. How many poems like that? How few will ever come to that glory?

The logic of laughter, the logic of dreams: which word is abused in this connection? Words themselves are abuse, are strings to tie imagination. A dream is authentic experience, of a world which I myself inhabit, a world inhabiting me. In dreams we imagine that we are who we are precisely because in dreams we cease deliberately acting. There is no one to impress in dreams, no one but ourselves. But we're not there either. The audience is

only there after. Except if the dream's within a dream. A dream of self-consciousness: the exceptional dream.

Yet what can dreams be but acting, but fiction, when they can only refer to, and not participate in, a real world? It is in this way that dreams model the relationship which exists between 'real' worlds and art in general. Dreams without a waking world to refer to? What would they be? A waking which dreaming never interrupted, which never paused to take account (but in that way of not accounting which dreams have)? We must imagine madness there. Lying nearly still: in dreams we only are but act; waking, lit into action, we only act but are.

Ursula Le Guin's novel *The Lathe of Heaven* is a study of the hypothetical case of a subject whose dreaming is immediately effected in the external world. Everything he dreams comes true. As you'd expect bad guys get hold of him and make him dream bad stuff. But it all gets out of hand. Enough said. It's because we forget the way things happen that stories are worth listening to. Dreaming is where we pick up that technique. You can watch dogs doing it... coming to that bone as if out of nowhere. When only yesterday they buried it there.

It is the authentic acts of the dreamer which provide an interruption in the continuous burial of signs, the burial of images: those burials which enable speech. Speech: the reduction of the incomprehensible to a form of negotiation. All things being equal we say what they are. We go on and on. As if we knew what we were talking about. When it's the talking and its derailments we come from. Talk is the leveller. Through talk we imagine the will of heaven.

History is like this: deep denial for, even while in, the process of rewriting itself. Is it the picture of a world in which the waking always run the risk, as Descartes did in the *Meditations*, of being caught dozing? So waking to a world unlike the one known, and in which selves are no longer themselves? Such is the world that Walter Wanger's 1956 anti-communist/anti-McCarthyist (depending on your reading position) horrorspoof *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* parodies: a moment's sleep is enough for the alien mind to get hold of you and there goes your soul. Your past, all the past, will have a different meaning then. You look the same, you know everything you knew before but you are not you. You do not feel

anything because, in the manner of the dreamer, you are not quite in the world.

Is it not this scenario with zombies and wraiths, ghosts in their dated paraphernalia? The long dream on a drip of the life-supported? Where we imagine a loop, an echo? Nothing new where the hands have nothing to make? Or hands which have yet to hold? Babies: their coming to the world, to act. How do they dream? How do they wake? We intuit what we can't remember. Fast forward. Death's door. What does the mind make of it? How is the mind made up?

Is there life in the implosion? In life's last inch where time upends, folds back? A whole geography in there of coasts got up and peopled, left. In my big smuggler's coat every meal that I've had. And the fields folding out under each beast. Theirs are eyes too and the crops they take in, older still in each particular day. Taking in the sun, the rain, in every act more perfect than memory. Like a break in the skin and the drums get in. Crescendo. Glissando.

Memory makes it fast. But in there all the time in the world. We only hear from those who turn back. And if there's something familiar smelling, won't that be something we've learned? Maybe not the name of the place. But the idea of something to chew on. And rest. Before the world begins again. With or without. If it doesn't, it does.

Falling and falling and no hands to catch.

It is possible to hover around such a moment (that fall of consciousness as we imagine), develop a facility for it, a sort of play. There is a state in which we can retain awareness while allowing the carnival to begin. True boundarywork we cannot direct. We are not in. We are as guests or as gate-crashers in our own bodies then. What we understand we have brought from the alien mind whose works are suspended. Self spectators. And as spectators we can but be credulous.

This is half-life: the evanescence of all forms of consciousness. It is as a slippage from which we are constantly about to emerge. This is a state

which cannot be maintained. And yet in remaining awake after the loss of volition we see the imagery of our other world. The pictures are formed by everything that forms our waking selves, allow of no distraction that they be named. Yet they consist of, from the point of view of waking consciousness, nothing but distraction. Short circuit. What we see now is the parade of what's meant unstuck from its means. It goes on like an army of ants into its mountain, through mists in which it loses sight: of its way, of itself, of all that surrounds.

in mountains and mists

In dreams foreignness is absolutely pure, and this is the best thing for writing. Foreignness becomes a fantastic nationality.

- Cixous

Roofs climb each over each. As smoke calls, as mists still. Always some season turning. I am gathered in a maze of lanes. I'm in the pockets of the place. Closest the breast. Turning home. Getting there. But it's the paths that turn, the built world they obey. What choice but letting the winds take among voices, the instruments of lidless night. There's an unheard beat beneath the breath. Whichever way feet fall the track. Through mud and over running water, stone by stone, led through ages patching light. You cannot part this mist with hands.

Between the old town and the new town... look up and the cobble stones scatter, the tar melts. There's a cave where they took themselves. The seven. The sky itself weighed on them. There is disagreement about their names. There was a persecution. The Emperor was Decius. Condemned them. They fell into last prayers. And they slept.

You get to know the place not with the aid of the senses but some kind of groping. No hands though you have them. They're ghostly, go through things. When you explain and they listen, it is ancestors speaking. It is they who lead us from the town, to something more familiar. A place we've forgotten but find anyhow.

If there is a sea somewhere it sleeps in its great weight, in the measure of the waves. But the sea is only rumoured. The cliffs go up a long way and a long way down. There is rain in the unclad sky. Here in the mountains to be still is to move through paths of light. To walk awake is to come into stillness. The mountain paths are made with one string bowed. The air is frugal, gathers me.

Ahead a song on horseback. See nothing. There's always a bend in the rain. Only the hooves and the melody guiding where winds strung and

where winds will be. A girl sings her herd high in the cliffs. The cliffs are taller than eyes can take.

The cave was sealed once they all slept. To save some trouble. Generations pass. Until the place is needed for a cattle stall. The Seven wake with a hunger. And now in the reign of Theodosius they try to buy bread with the old coin, with the persecutor's head.

Bright day when the mountain stands over us. There's a tidemark to belief, a stain which covers up habits, makes everyday the coasts and the islands. Dark and light in tides too. It's the light kills them off. They resume the last prayers, the sleep.

Stream by my side and at night floating lanterns. Someone holds their baby to piss in the stream. The here and now. Unending submersion.

I'm weary later. From the day walking. Flat in the night. Ink soaks me and I unfold the little I know. In that peculiar quality of words, however they're lost: that you cannot unsay them.

Better to dream than to speak dreams waking. Plenty dulls the palate saying plenty. Sleep to dream and wake to play. That's my wearying chase of tail. In mountains and in mists.

over the border the everyday lapse

He is himself, and not himself. He hears himself speak and he sees himself act, but he feels that some other 'he' has borrowed his body and stolen his voice. Or perhaps he is conscious of speaking and acting as usual, but he speaks of himself as a stranger with whom he has nothing in common; he has stepped out of his own self.

Bergson, in *Le Rire*, of the dreamer

The slamming behind me. Voice with my name. Calling me from my homes, my many birthplaces. To the sea, to the forest. On either side of the border a prayer.

I am always returning to the place. I never remember crossing. It is as if the man with the uniform lulls me from my wits into his eyes or the bruise on the page.

You want it to be a door. And beyond the oceans till you're drunk. And burnt. Turned half to weed. Imagine rotting into the ground. Till you're one and not. Or taking flame. All the kinds of dissolution turn out to be tricks of desire.

The slamming voice. And the speech of the hinges. In my closed eyes adrift of things.

Under a tree see him sleeping. The crooked hat, the eyes cast in.
From where do you see him? From branches over? From under the skin?

Where there is nothing I am found out. Where evidence lacks. Where
wishes won't hold. Where you assume I won't be seen. Like seeing writing
where it isn't. Awake but not. Aware. Not there. Hypnagogue riddling.

There is a furthest extent. And there is a line of last recession. The
day comes lapping up to the door. The dream is real. And pure abstraction.

In the afternoon in the old market square you see them, shut against
the day's enduring, business' lack. At posts. And indefatigable. They could
be scaling heights to where the breeze starts in summer. Because there's
something cannot stall the soul.

Between the old town and the new town there is some stealing across.
Nothing stamped, nothing sighted. The spires and the hinges. The dust
unsettling. Neither let nor hindrance.

Behind closed eyes. I lie in a certain way – leaf curled – and hope that
they will come. The cast, the others.

I make a dream. And dreaming makes me. I mean to get there
unintending.

Only by the effort to pass beyond understanding does this place come to me. Like a crooked smile founding adversity. Only by discarding the effort. By means of lack of means. Only in this run of waters won't be named. Only in this unnamings. Getting lost in the translation. Having to guess where words go.

The sea in its sleep turning and turning. And waking too. Returns from the dead. Many happy returns.

In the other country... we know how things are. We don't. We know that the others are wrong. Know wrongly. We cannot be mistaken in this.

The last thing is I get in the queue like everyone else. The carnival approaches me: upending of the day.

Lying into a lapse. Or coming from one. Coming to and from my senses.

Can't be got back. This falling from the world. The border passes unofficially. I dissolve. The other journey begins.

Or I have a knack for that moment. Wings take me where I hang in the rafters like abandoned air.

I watch in an alien mind. I can't say no. I am about to watch, about to listen. This is my evanescence. In and of a state which cannot be maintained.

Remaining after the loss of volition. In the ground already but with last words to say. With no means of saying. I have a view over the rim of the crater. Price of the privilege?

Struck off. Failed at the effort. What does this remind me of? How does it remind me? The moment, that moment. Described so gone. In favour of what? Letting go, letting... I give way to the story... telling me. In which I'm told.

Become foreign in myself. Passive, pursued, possessed of what logic would abandon. The best you do is shift sideways, wish to wish till the light takes out our wishes. This vigilance betrays itself. Eternally. Of course.

Do you come back to the logic of yes or no? Things are what they are or they aren't.

Every thread takes up a colour. And the morning sun takes up each thread. Coming from the pure land then, where the murders were all unflinching, survived. Made me.

It's falling from a sky. And where a sky places.

In my world, in the world in me, how many? The mansion setting and these houses. I hear the hinges of the light. The years spun back. The fulcrum cast in me.

Inside and hunting up the key to get out. Like a burglar double deadlocked in.

memory: the cast of the past

Back in the quilt, the paisley chase, in mazes of the work descended till there is nothing worked: pure land it is that's self-created.

Down under the dream in plot of light, shape; grief is a word that catches all ends. But back before that somewhere, back in the bigger-than-me pattern, softer than skins I sink.

Word dissolving into image. Image crusting to a script. Mute mouth and then a little dribbling. How I am in the text now, excluded from the all outside. In a circle joins me anywhere.

Who authorises this, my presence? Who joins me? How am I joined?

The world completes itself unwitting. Everything I need is here. I have no need but see it straight. I want the secret in not waking. And that desire is of all views across. And into worlds which won't be known. The hope of getting across but as you were, as who you were, yourself.

To dream is to rekindle hope and to frustrate it. The characters are all my own. And the plot is the sort of thing that happens in that country from which I'm always returning. Never quite remembered in tact.

The remembering of dreams: that's somewhere else.

After dreaming you we meet. I fail to ask whose creation you are. Your nonchalance is unconvincing. Surely you know where you've been. You conceal it. Have I quite forgotten?

There is a moment which defeats memory, defeats the definition of moments. Falling asleep is the one thing which cannot be remembered.

There is a blind spot Freud called the navel where the dream reaches down into the unknown. That's what there is to interpret. It's the same with any fiction. The truth of vision is bolder than any voice.

Do we come and go as we please? Are the laws here those we know, those which bring us?

A short stay in the hospital and you begin to forget the function of money. It could be taught to you again. It becomes like something you could save up to know.

We are always succumbing to what we can't remember. Couples lie side by side in other worlds out of coupling. Pure speculation to put them together.

Sleep approaches us like a man with cheap tickets, wanting something I can't quite make out.

There is some part of the animal we cannot eat. When will we know? The laughter begins, the groan of philosophy? What but the continuity of failures in the effort at staying awake.

The birds at my funeral singing for me as much as for today.

In the *Epic of Gilgamesh* Enkidu dreams those who had been gods and those who had ruled the world as servants in a house of dust.

A settlement fails. But there's some one left sleeping under a tree.
Buckley. The beard gets longer and longer. He comes by some wives. He
forgets his own tongue. His skin goes dark with being there. But the
bastards find him. Remind him of everything. They fix him up with a job.
Give him purpose. No blame. He helps them. It's a kind of burial.

I always wake up rubbing the lamp. Memory shines in that flawless
surface. More sunshine and hazards than I could delay.

Rubbing and rubbing for some fine mist to catch me: a net.

Nothing pours out but the speech I had lost. Nothing comes on but
the day.

the body in its map/journey unfolding

How dares one sleep? Such trust in the loyalty of my body, in the still night, such faith in the order and constancy of the universe! Tonight, absence you will return! Once again you will resume your few hours' throne, mysterious frightening impotence, quintessential weakness, unbreakable spell that chains the closed eyes to their images... One cannot turn round, held fast in the soft core of sleep, to catch him in the act – the Monkey that shows the slides of the Dream.

Valéry, 'Poems in the Rough'

Following that glimmer, a crack. Into the borderlands. Like prayer abandoned to its host. Took up with the skin. Which is ways down, ways in.

There's the Peach Blossom cave. Where the old ways persists. The people have forgotten nothing but the world. Whoever discovers them swears not to tell. Cannot find a way back. Lives in that haunting.

When judgement stops and the light folds forward of its own - or ours. or whose? - accord... then we are on our unknown way. Where the mind is always headed. Today as any other. Now as never before. As Po Chü-I imagines in his reverie:

In my dream at night I climb a mountain
alone with my straight holly staff
how many crags, how many valleys ?
I explored them all, my feet never tired
My step was as strong as ever.
When the mind goes back
does the body to return to its old state?
Can the body suffer, while the soul is still strong?
Are these - soul and body - vanities?
Which more unreal, dreaming or waking?
In the day my aged feet totter,
In the night they power over the hills.
Day and night divide me into equal parts.

There I pick up what here I lose.

A moment places me, displaces. This place is mine. Knows me. Responds. I have handholds. I have ways blind forward. It is my time now. These my familiar signs. No going back. And there's no leaving. I am tattooed into the quilt still making. In my folds sung forth a hillside spread. Dry with the wind and the sun cuts. In my many creviced cape the lines grow deeper with each step. The crew of selves crowds on. Knows me. Responds. The place is mine. A moment places me, displaces.

I dreamt of awakesness, how sleep wouldn't come. I dreamt:

There is a magic pillow
better than any flying rug
or lamp to rub for wishes.

A magic pillow
which fits with any bed,
lies under any head.

The vehicle of what you will,
rug out from under will as well.

Every other world lies
unravelling from there,
like and unlike this.

Where you wish
the pillow takes.
What will be
your own crew makes.

Measured from here
the distances, heights.
Forgotten the hunter
whom prey chase from harm.
Suns ripen up alert to the soil.

And if you cannot kick the ball,
feet cannot quite connect
the lamp to rub, the contents
of the day, the rug,

no argument requires.
You go where the magic
pillow takes. You make
up your mind to go.

In my dream people are running in all directions: children, women. I
gather them in my cloak of nations. My self an ark of nesting angels.
Covenanted. Every syllable falls in. Hi! Ho! Myself am a border erased.
Am sense emerging, nonsense, unchallengeable authority. Nothing can be
contained. But everything is in its body. And there is nothing but
assumption: the clothes of the dream.

We are lonely in our multiplicity asleep. We give up our bodies, our
way in the world. Undoing the damage done all day. Nothing assumed.
And everything.

Dreams are thieving. They plagiarise life. Dream characters are all
our own and everyone's, abbreviated. They are as the undead among us, as
characters in fiction. We would give them our breath to speak their names.
But dreams proceed as if by rights. Lull us from our causes, effects.

Someone is calmly reading a death sentence, declaring a war, or a
love. They are parleying in battle. They coo. The lovers are baying for
blood, vivid. In my dream here we are - I'm on foot and you're in your
bright new sports car... I haven't the stomach for the encounter. And when
our mutual friend sees me, jogging away, more and more strangely, further
and further off, when he asks after me you say 'it only looks like him, it

isn't'. There is nothing here can be escaped. When you're away off I hear you. In my dream tell me things I can't believe. Where does that authority come from? That beautiful complicity? Only in words which can't be heard, only so perfect in a dream. Only room for two in my shiny new sportscar.

Through all the pages nothing there. Everywhere is distance I'm in. Things here that have always been. But the map is remaking me. Crossing me. Skin into skin. And deeper. Everyday starting from scratch again. And buried my best assumptions. Something I can't help thinking resembles me; and isn't even thought.

Again, I dream us both in flight. Collaborating to miss each other. Not blame but the feeling that blame is there, unfinished. And then getting stuck in the same rain, under the one flap of canvas. Finding the words as if nothing had happened.

Do we dream together? Are we dreamt? Side by side here on this shelf, untouched by the sirens. The dreamer requires this patching from suspended judgement; the exercise of faith in the materials, the legacy, faith in the doubt which casts over these. This faith-in-doubt of the dreamer: subversion. Socrates' 'wild beast nature that peers out in sleep'. The dreamer likens dissimilar things. The danger of sophistry that 'philosophers become strange monsters, incorporate with very being'. Ambivalence is what the state guards against. The wakeful dog keeps watch.

What have I got to believe by now? Faith by association is what the dreamer has to go on. All turning points. Waking, dreaming. Gradually I am

gathering a home from all these constitutive moments. The day will be for writing one day. It will be nothing stolen from. How will I dream that way?

Or this is where I'm to falter? I'm the driven beast. And losing my lines through the field. Until the clothes of the dream dissolve.