

The Rust Tree Inside Me (1996)

By Kut-byol Jung (정끝별) (South Korea)

Translated from the Korean by Chae-Pyong Song and Anne Rashid

I've been sitting on the windowsill. What has gone wrong?
Alongside a movie theater, a few bars, and a closed supermarket
absurd red insects disappear.

Line I know there's not any place better than here.

5 I feared the clock and the train,
wars and horror movies, too. I was young then.
I wondered if maybe a corpse was lying between the walls--
a common fantasy. Where was Father then?
When I saw innocent love, for a moment, my heart would stop.

10 I've been sitting on the windowsill.

I want to be a typist with perfect spelling.
Sometimes I'd like to have a child, a scary thought.
Without wheels and pedals, a bike is of no use.
An unfortunate person walks, following an abandoned railroad track.

15 There are things I would like to forget silently
like the railroad disappearing, covered by overgrown grass.

When the curtain descends, what kind of dream would fall in this window?

My life like a birch tree that dares to sweep away Heaven--
I once thought I would live like that.

20 After climbing up high enough when the tree could no longer bear me
I'd like to return to earth, stepping on branch tips.
But I, who hold a mouthful of changing clouds,
am a worn-out third-class singer. Tears are falling.
The rain of tears falling. What sort of fiction is this?



Kut-byol Jung
born 1964

Underneath the Rust Tree, Part Two (1996)

Love that comes like a picnic
in the place of excrement with blowflies,
enjoy
the remaining spring.

Line 5 You, with the ruddy face, don't reject me.

Hallucinated ears and hallucinated eyes
close up when rain patters in
the exiled wound--
I, dark like smoke.

10 The universe and I
will fall like flowers,
just boards walking, standing without
nails hammered in.