

THE DREAM
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**A dream of mine that is very vivid, entering my
conversations, the poems I am translating
and the news I read during the protest in Hong
Kong in 2019.**

**I recalled it, traced it, calmed it.
It connected me with the ones of others.**

*“Today I went to walk near the sea ... It was great.
I like the touch of sand on my feet. Following
the curves of the waves, I walked there for a long time ...”*

*“Dear, today I walked in piles of leaves on the
ground, in the forest. They were already dampened
by dews and rains. I like the sound of the leaves
when I was walking ... here, listen.”*

She doesn't talk, just keeps walking. He is ahead of her, looking back from time to time.

Since she was a child, she entered the forest with her family this time every year. The walk was long. Her father usually led in the front, her uncles and cousins followed. She was at the end of the line with her mother most of the time. She liked to look down while she was walking: under and around her shoes, messy grass losing green, fallen leaves, (no flowers anymore) but all kinds of leaves in hundreds of colors ... stones breaking out from the leaves too, stones covered with green moss, stones with green moss and flame colored leaves ... flame colored leaves falling everywhere ...

Once there was a fire. When she smelled the smoke and looked up, the flames were already approaching them. She didn't remember how they ran down the mountain and escaped the fire in the end, but she recalled that when the fire blocked her way, her mother immediately jumped into the fire and grabbed her. She was just seven or eight at that time. She can only remember, being carried on her mother's back, she smelled her mother's burnt hair.

“I dreamed of you yesterday. There aren’t many details since I forgot most of them, but we were walking, as if travelling at a place with lots of rivers. At one moment we couldn’t find a way to cross, but suddenly you pointed faraway and gently said, ‘Look, there is a bridge’. And then I awoke.”

Dream:

She is standing at a crossroad in the street. In the distance, at the other side of the street, she sees huge crowds of people walking. Everyone is moving in one direction, slowly ... In their hands, they are holding boards and banners. She sees them shouting something at the same time, but she cannot hear. Words are written on the boards but she cannot read – she is kept still (or she doesn't want to move). She stands there looking at them passing from far away ... There seems to be a glow of fire.

Now an image unfolds: a skin with scars, dampened by water, whatever it may be (dews and rains, rivers or the sea); a soft arm with visible veins; a fingertip stained with a dot of blue pigment; and a floating hair (in the air or in the water) ...

The image was slowly burnt away ...

For a long time she knew that she wanted to do this, and today it is the time. She remembers the route: first they will go deep into the forests, and then they will start to climb up the mountain. The road isn't steep at all but it's long and winding. After several hours they will reach a little plain on top of the mountain. That's where her family would usually take breaks. She remembers upon reaching the top, her father always held her up and pointed at the horizon at the farthest distance for her, there, that's the destination.

They already started to walk before dawn, but there are still many hours ahead. He is carrying a lute on his back. They have to arrive there before sunset.

“Today’s light doesn’t change much ... the dawn can be as long as you want ...”

“... But I think dim light suits us, like 6 in the morning or 6 in the evening ... at that time we were not fully awake. I looked outside the window in a daze. You were leaning your head on my shoulder ... 6 in the evening, we were both worn out ... gradually falling asleep, gazing at the sun sinking slowly, we sank ...”

Dream:

There is a bridge.

She finally finds herself standing at that bridge: she looks down, what's below her feet is no longer a river, but those large crowds of people passing below her (if dreams have memory, she would notice it's the same crowd). They are wearing clothes in different bright colors. They are still holding signs, boards and banners and still walking.

She lowers her eyes seeing colors flowing steadily below her. She feels the vibration when they are walking by. Her whole body feels it. She closes her eyes but she still sees: the endless crowd. A humming sound slowly arises from below, getting louder and louder and louder ... yes, this time she hears.

(a body of a young girl appears in the water, naked)

“They say she committed suicide ...”

“Her body keeps silent ...”

“... She doesn’t smile”

“... Somebody doubts whether it is true or not”

(Her skin ... dyed blue ...)

“She probably doesn’t feel pain anymore ...”

“tell me those suspicious elements ...”

“She doesn’t frown ...”

“A 15 year-old girl ...”

“... She is completely empty.”

“... no suspicious elements ...”

... It's getting louder and louder.

Dream:

She is struck by the sudden noise behind her: I turn around. I see her appearing in the crowd looking at me, also standing in the crowd. It's getting louder and louder, the humming sound from the footsteps and the voices. Somebody starts to shout and a kid is crying, and something heavy was thrown to the ground ... People start to run around and there arises the smoke, with sounds of metal hitting on heavy surfaces. Now I am surrounded by lights of flames, now come explosions ... hundreds of cries and hundreds of shouts ...

Suddenly a group of people wearing white rush into the crowd. They run directly to her and grab her away. She struggles and fights ... but the smoke is soon becoming too dense. Now around me is complete darkness/whiteness, only the smell of someone's burnt hair ...

After (I cannot tell how long) a silence ... it starts to rain. Then it starts to turn heavy, in the end, a waterfall: a blue waterfall shooting towards me ...

In the thunderous sound of the waterfall, I hear someone say to me:
"She didn't jump into the water and kill herself. She was murdered."

“I know ... because in my dream I met her. Her hair was blue, her eyes were blue, her skin was also dyed into a pale blue tone ...

She told me, (I know), she just had a dream; in her dream, she jumped into the sea. She wanted to escape from her hometown and search for something. Her hometown told her ,if you leave, don't come back.

So she swam for a long time and finally arrived somewhere in the middle of the water. There, a group of people sat in a circle. She went and sat down together with them. She found herself naked. In the middle of the circle a fire was burning. She told me she felt warm ...”

Another hour and we will reach the mountain top.
Four more hours, from somewhere in the woods,
we will hear the sound of water. Tracing the sound,
we will arrive at the sea.

To memorize someone, we go to the sea. Together
with the sound of waves, we play the lute and sing.
We will stand in the waves and in the waves this time,
I will gently recall the dream of her.

Here, Listen.

..... maple leaves
 moon soaked in the water
 on the surface of the water
 half of her face hidden behind the lute

 three, two sounds
 there was affection before there was melody
 sound, and sound she lowered her head and played
 continuously, continuously
 her finger slightly pressed the strings slowly slid
 stroked and then plucked
 sudden rains
 like soft words between lovers
 like beads falling onto the jade plate
 like birds` singing slipping under the flowers ...
 like whimpering spring water

Now

 no sound is higher than sound
 All of a sudden
 silver bottles exploding with water bursting out
 clanking swords and spears
 At the end of the music
 she plucked at the centre of the lute
 four strings altogether
 making one sound
 like tearing the silk fabric

 silent only
 to see at the heart of the water the autumn moon
 whiteness

“Dear, what did you dream last night?”

*“Last night I dreamed that you slept very well;
last night I dreamed that in my room there are
many flowers ...”*

ENDNOTES

- 1 Now in Hong Kong, “to dream” means to go out on the street and protest.
- 2 “The death of Chan Yin-lam, a 15-year-old female, occurred on or shortly after 19 September 2019. Her naked corpse was found floating in the sea near Yau Tong, Hong Kong on 22 September 2019. Following a preliminary autopsy, police asserted that no foul play was suspected, and that Chan had committed suicide. Her death was the subject of a conspiracy theory that alleged that the government murdered her for participating in the 2019 Hong Kong protests.” (From Wikipedia “Death of Chan Yin-lam”)