

Poetry Series

Henry Tong
- poems -

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Henry Tong(2001)

Haoran (Henry) is currently a Chinese high school student dedicated in Chinese, English and French poetry for 9 years. He was awarded "Young Poet Laureate 2017" in Beijing for bringing Song-meter into modern poetry and also studies poetry's pragmatic role in developing cultural awareness and social recognition.

He believes in the potential power of poetry and language in the modern social life. He writes in the welcome letter as organizer of National Poetry Month 2018, "Rejuvenating poetry in today's social life has long been a part of my dream and mission. With the growing popularity of 'fragmented reading', an inclination to only accept fast-paced, short-length pieces of literature, people would have neither time nor interest to digest deeper, broader contexts. Modern poetry, in its most succinct and concise form, provides the young generation a precious chance to observe, reflect, and express their worldview and experience. Poets refuse to follow the herd, independent of social dogma. They have the courage to voice opinions, inspire others, and foster change. By organizing this activity, I envision not many emerging poets, but more brave minds with empathy, enthusiasm and skillful language."

"Your words are powerful and profound, much beyond his peers." Timothy, a visitor, commented after reading the poems. Haoran utilizes techniques both from Chinese and English literature, which adds color and vigor to his descriptions. He also pays attention to bridge souls of different cultures, creating a freer space for disparate ideas and opinions to be voiced also blends his worldview and philosophy into observations.

Themes he likes to reveal include faith and identity, struggle of individuality, tradition and modernity, sympathy and empathy, freedom and political trend, and human interactions.

Haoran continues on his journey as a student poet. He regards poetry as his way of viewing the world and expressing himself.

A Sonnet In The Snow

The drifting petals unbend my soft brows,
And trace my footsteps in sinuous roads.
I ramble bypass olden walls anew,
And warm the frost to nourish shrivelled rose.

The mist of noon awakes the world from drowse,
I grasp the hidden gleam: grace of grass grows.
Beneath the thick quilt, I hear whisper flows
Behold! No one lays tranquil in repose.

In which boundless snow as future endows
In starry skies, My heart ascends aloft.
Altered months awaits, dreaming nature oft:
Frozen winter springs afore summer falls.

Until greentime fades, broken branches sprout,
Fondest sorrow with, memories black out.

Henry Tong

Amidst The Smoke From Aleppo

Land your tender feet on the desert
wait for the coarse and crumbled voice:
You are about to enter Aleppo,
the warzone hides you close ahead.

Amidst the dreary smoke from Aleppo
grandma is cooking her Champa rice.
Nothing happened except in the news
and she would hear it and leave a sigh.

News has been broken once a while
"Aleppo is taken! Retreat Justice a night! "
but what shall there be more than curious
more than searching-novelty eyes?

I haven't been to Aleppo, let's be frank,
I haven't experienced war, let's be frank.
I haven't heard a gunshot, let's be frank,
So have you all, so let's all be frank.

Thus we take the news in complacency
and simulate battles in tapes and Lego
for the smoke from Aleppo, aloof and dirty,
would never fly in our humble pueblos,

As if amidst the smoke from Aleppo,
the children's cry, the veiled evils,
have transcended our numb senses
when a 20-second ad intrudes.

"We'll keep you updated.
We're from Aleppo."
You leave with a sigh and tie your shoes.
"A busy day, folks. Plenty to do."

Henry Tong

Baikal

I look into the purest pupils
of the frozen sapphire
fallen from glistening sky.

Wrinkles of God's hands
injected veins of arctic ice
in lapse of a millennium.

Glitz penetrates icicles
melting a spinning centroid
of hibernating waterfalls.

Scattered bonfires gloamed
the parted lips of mountains
from the farther lakeside.

Stars gaze at their reflections,
like a Shamanist ritual, seeking
their long lost counterparts.

Henry Tong

Ballad Of A Bard

Seeing a soul of firefly
sold its body to purchase light
for the vast ocean-
yet still, darkness rewrites.

Packing a bouquet of leaves,
the rouge was discarded, obsolete
from the gaze of lovers-
yet still, it bloomed in peace.

Joining a circle of laughter,
the bard anticipated the muse-
his mind occupied by the typer,
and glib tongue, excused.

He flew the firefly,
and picked up the rose,
and mandated his typer
to click clumsy notes.

Henry Tong

Beyond The Barbed Wires

Plunged in the bitter tundra ice,
The solitary guard of solstice heat
Shivered stiff in the Arctic wind.

It heard the harmonica, the dreaded
beauty, the folklore, penetrating
the chill- it was the calving season.

Henry Tong

Birthmark

A stirring silhouette,
a fall of grace.
A blooming bud of peony,
a scar forever stamped.

Precisely measured stroke
a gift of uncertain joke.
Absorbed stares and sneers
and disdained the Tarot seers.

An impregnable armor,
a pool of hopeless stain.
A mark that creates body
a mark never changed by me.

Henry Tong

Blackish Colors

Smear'd on the dark black rainbow
is reticance, retarded
to admit dispersion of white light.

Twisted ignorance thrived
with the inversed violent storm
to exhaust the palpable love.

My key is too few to unlock
thousands of hidden scars, and
the flying puzzle in the air.

Traces of tear beneath the smile
stamped a crime of freedom
on a living sigh.

Chinese Version:

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Henry Tong

Born

Light is born
out of darkness
witnessed by universe.

Justice is born
out of suppression
witnessed by violence.

Truth is born
out of fake knowledge
witnessed by experts.

God was born
out of randomness
witnessed by order.

I was born
out of exoskeleton
witnessed by dreams.

Henry Tong

Coldest Star

High above the treetop,
when the Arctic wind
glides upon the aurora
that soon vanishes to
the rosy tint of twilight,
there you are,
the coldest star.

Estranged in the thinnest air,
Aloof in the farthest end,
Away from smoke and fire of men,

Deserted in proud loneliness,
Strangled by defying gravitation
of the endless orbit. Once been
put haughty, you cannot resist.

Oh, the coldest star,
a shimmering dot from far.

People admire the crystal ruins,
the ashes on your scars, but
inside your passion in despair,
your soul is burning apart.

Consuming the vestige of heat
were the vacuum, the darkness
born in the vortex of time.

The Coldest star,
your heart once warm
but exhausted by a transient
charm, and from the bare
branches you hang in the air
when light travels in a
million year, in a path of
unfathomable maze of char.

The Coldest Star

the Coldest, star.

Henry Tong

Cracking The Incomprehensibles

Unreasonable words
are forced with a reason:
delicately pacted truths
are too true to be true.

Framed in the skull alone
blood trespassing zones- -
sentences are galloping
in the wide prairie of destitute.

Thus cry, with a trembling hand,
the defamed utterance of English-
14 pages long, single spaced plea
of betwixted incomprehensibles.

Henry Tong

Crepuscule Of Alley

Beneath Gilded eaves,
stone lions are spitting
a heavy, permeating smog.

Scattered particles
the infinitesimal dances
diffracted delusions.

Tardy footsteps see through
their projection on the wall
decayed into mottled cracks.

As a humble faith arose
from the puddle in the sun,
it dreaded hands on clocks.

Time was carved in the bricks
that reversed subtleness
in the sinuous Hutong alley.

The sun shall not cover
the message of crepuscule,
nor it hides Yinyang
in the snow.

Henry Tong

Dominion

Rulers rest in their dominions,
a million pieces of a fragmented glass
each performing an isolated gloss.

Amazed. Amused. Allured. Abandoned.

Apathetic.

In their polished refractions.
In their delicate deceptions.
In their painstaking calculations.
In their incessant subjugations.

Blind to the world's enduring conflicts
they mourn their petty loss.
Deaf to the call of awakening minds
they cower with their dross.

Rejection.

Resignation. Redemption. Ressurrection.

Rulers rest in their dominions,
a glass designed for their void
shattering truth and beings.

And My dream is to change it all.

Henry Tong

Eclipse

She sinks into dark blue
when night begins to brew,
when lanterns are lit crimson,
when sharp cries are soothed.

She veils her evasive contour
with a piece of shadowy silk,
with an unlaid, fallen Canopy
with an ascending flow.

She is timid, enveloped by
fear of heavenly dog's hunger,
of a flash shedding a thunder,
of a spotlight turning down her.

Her fresh blood is frozen in scarlet.
Her heartbeat is paused in dungeon.
Her shackles steal her emotion, and
fossilize her skin, coarse and wizened.

She hangs in the higher space
but is hanged in a struggling pain.
She gazes at Earth where crowds
are cheering in her desolate miracle.

She expects warmth and applause
from those she bothers not to know.
She is fainting white in the end of eclipse,
and cheers surcease into silence.
Thus coldness dominates her again.

Henry Tong

Erased

Prayers muttered by unfed children
who walked bypass their burnt houses
were occupied with false emptiness.

Hours had nowhere to stop the decay
of dead bodies, rotten in the thin air
with a distinguished smell of perfume.

Barriers were set to block tomorrow
by then they shall flee from home
as meaningless names on the tombstone.

Their worlds were verdicted on paper
and their definitions easily erased
by a snuff of tobacco, a cheap talkshow.

When my lament roared like the Naf river
I was tied on a rundown boat, against
the current of their depreciated hope.

I was enslaved by the title "refugee"-
for I want nothing more, but peace.

Henry Tong

Filtered

Hardly a trace
of sorrowful smiles
on noble ties.

Like distilled water
nullified a purest sin
uncoating the shell.

Henry Tong

First Snow In Beijing, Haikus

Birds on whitened trees,
warbles muted by the snow
in serenity.

Bamboos shaded green
bowed their heads toward the sun
saluting aloft.

Rose buds dimmed by dews
its tenderness were shattered
in the start of spring.

Sidewalk by the lake
were stretched for miles into light fog,
endless to return.

Henry Tong

Four Steps Dance

Her eyes
were pure and deep
as Lake Baikal
long had ceased.

Her hair
floated in the air
cascading black pearls
down by shoulders.

Lips were fresh crimson,
slightly parted
to feel the dampness
of the autumn air.

Petals landed softly
and deftly on her head,
which fossilized me
and a pond of fish.

Henry Tong

Fragrance Of Love, Fragrance Of Tea

I see love as a pot of tea
placed in the floor of bamboo vale.
Its scent floats to the farthest sea,
but humbly stores in nature's tale.

Neither pungent as instant coffee,
pressing tastebuds to accept
nor insipid as purified water,
disinterested to reject-

It starts fresh, ends rich.
It milds bitter, leaves sweet.
It boils tears and troubles
into a rising aroma of steam.

If promises hold dear, it never dies.
The scent never fakes, though it flies.
If water is tainted, then dancing leaves
shall clear it out and start again.

Time selects the best leaves to green
Nature ensures the best water to drink
Patience wakes the coupling to see
a pot of tea, a pot of beauty.

Such tea I sip, is a long-living life.
Every taste of it becomes vibrant.
I see love as a pot of tea,
the puriest of all, bright and deep.

Henry Tong

Grandma's Poetry Book

I hold my grandma's wrinkled hands
She holds her Poetry Book;
On yellowed edge my finger lands
"Tiny Tadpoles! " I look.

So with her beat my cradle swings
Her whisper wets my ear
The Tadpoles jump in shallow springs
"Ripples" My heart can hear.

I ride my soul in gentle rhymes
Till vibrant waters join
Where each line hides a million dimes
Each word, a silver coin.

Diving deep, and my sight is blurred
I lose my grasp of pen
As if a sorrow-laden bird
Is caged by mighty men.

"Be free! ", I scream, off from her hands,
"My thoughts are trapped by Book! "
I burn the scattered page of poems
And write my lines of youth.

Yet still, I stumble, on my way
In vain my scribblings trace
My thoughts fly back to olden gray
The marks I can't efface.

To farthest world, I must traverse-
There wreath and tears await.
For life flows like an endless verse-
My words cannot translate.

Age; rage; my poetry won't mend
the wind of ashes spray,
The glorious verse my dreams append
Starts where the Tadpoles play.

A world's unfolded in my palm
'Tis Grandma's Poetry Book.
Endearing for a mighty psalm
Forever, I peruse.

Henry Tong

I Heard The Chime From Faraway

I Heard the Chime from Faraway-
an Echo in the Wind-
The Ancient Summons to Display-
its faint sublimity.

Before the brightest years decay-
A Blessing's left to speak-
The World is ready to enjoy-
A Fiesta in the Bleak.

Whence the skies are bound to weave-
the Wave of Infinity?
So few would dare to apprehend-
A Carol-Rhapsody.

Wherefore my solitude repents-
A Thousand bells aring?
My Thoughts and prayers with the toast-
Softly take the wings.

For I am armored to withstand-
The Moans of Dreary Wind-
The Light and Heat Emblaze my Pen-
Dimming Perplexed Dreams.

Henry Tong

I Remember

I remember
what's forgotten
what's been effaced
in a foreign lore.

The bolded letters
in black-white paper
are shredded to
a profane illusion.

The fragile vase
denied by gritty dust
is exposed to light
in a forlorn farm.

The last sturdy tree
erecting between bricks
of a collapsed wall
treaded by multitude.

The highest mount,
its apex blocked by
the heavy autumn mist,
is shrouded to shrink.

What's forgotten
stays intact in chaos
unperturbed by turbulence
waiting for an observer.

And I record
those left in oblivion
if my poems are
not soon forgotten.

Henry Tong

I Rise Like The Morning Dew (Age 15)

Lest I not embrace cloudy days anew,
Which on eve burning sun left modest trace- - -
I rise, drift and dry like the morning dew.

Beyond the Luna enticed and ensued
My history gasps in gaps as sun surreys
Lest I not embrace cloudy days anew.

Traversing paced I, slipped chances few
Where soothing sands of humanism frost
I rise, drift and dry like the morning dew.

The faded beauty shed lonely tears drew
Awakened night haunts my dreams lame,
Lest I not embrace cloudy days anew.

Moistened petals that brilliance in hue,
Dyed with no fancy but nourished toil.
I rise, drift and dry like the morning dew.

Revolving years rolled, gleaming days flew
Lest I not embrace cloudy days anew,
I rise, drift and dry like the morning dew.

Henry Tong

I, Too

I, too, like a poet,
restlessly spill
trauma of words
on the paralyzed paper.

I, too, like a poet,
sometimes aloof in
His own dreams, mostly
in lonely depression.

Yet I understand one thing-
the power poems harness-
like the sharpest spear
penetrating les fleurs du mal.

Metaphors are my shield of
enthusiastic craziness, in which
I call out the heretical reason;
Irony is my Pegasus, taking me
above lies and slanders.

But I, too, am a human, a loyal
servant of game of words. I, too,
am a slave of worldview, invictus,
though, controlled by my lens.

I, too, silence myself sometimes,
fear of reciting the honorable verses.
Yet I, too, write myself poems,
proud be it a song of bursting wisdom.

I am a speck of the crowd-
yet no one can dust me off.

Henry Tong

If My Thoughts Take Height

If my thoughts run high to the margin of being
out of the bound of cognition,
torn by the wind of deception,
I shall disperse to only two pieces
one writing "identity"
the other writing "faith".

I would follow the trace of logic
pioneering in the field of endlessness
and when the logic is outcasted
resurrecting in the falsehood of magic.

I would then knot the strings of reason
into the veins of people's skin
and when rampage hits them hard
shatter them to imprint the pain.

I'm merciful to dark nights
had I thought I lived in light!
Black veils blinded my sight.

Henry Tong

Incarcerated By Sorrow

My youth wafts through
the surface of rippling river
and inspires a layer in the wave.

Deep down the blue
There swims a fish of silver
who drinks the chagrin in my cave.

Its shadow haunts
in my sorrow; it cleans up
hallucinations of my faith.

My youth cannot weep
for tears are wrunged
by the ephemeral joy-

A tremor of the cheeks,
a transient "smile"
on the surface of my soul.

My memories are hidden
in the underwater grave
guarded by a silver fish.

Once my youth lived
but incarcerated in darkness
and suffocated by light.

Henry Tong

Looking Back At The Future

My fate was carved in strokes, deep and shallow,
next to a censer, on oracle bones. The seers bound
from ancient soil bowed their heads low for
a ritual. They reached for rosin, a gift of time,
and drilled its ashes into fire. Until the bones
were charred and cracks appeared they knelt again,

which marked my life to start and end,

In an instant, in an ritual, slipping between
fingertips. I merely grasped the rustling wind,
along with whispers wrought by sin, a message
endowed with prophecy, deciphered me a myth,

Hidden in the cracks indiscernible to me.

"In the deep strokes you must toil, toil for
the cracks to spread, in which you receive
a blessing for longevity of life, " gently
paused and it contrasted, "shallow stood for
leisure remnants- you would fill your nights
to nurture, but instead the heaven heard
your healings so they issued a divine warrant
placing back your haunting heart."

Putting aside heavy labor, leisure was the
rest of life. But in carves of deep and shallow
I read what to value then.

Henry Tong

Mad Questions (Age 13)

Who's me in the name of a signal to me?
Who's me in the corrupted body?
Who's me standing still, facing everybody?
Who's me, an answer indefinite and serene.

I am here, but is it my soul or reincarnated spirit?
I can speak, but is it the echo of my heartstring?
I believe, but is it a collective force individually?
I can dream, but is it virtually a reality?

Invictus I am, though Jungle Rules still prevail;
Lonely I write, though my soul connects with a mail;
I have a shadow, though I don't know if it's my tail;
I see a rainbow, though I think that's also a trail.

Whose logic am I using, to justify my morality?
Is it embodied by wisdom, or preached by Figures?
Whose emotion am I outpouring, to express my identity?
Is it an inherent nature, or a taught nurture?

When all the core values confuse me, who can judge me?
If truths are blind with headphones, who can I trust t'see?
Then a mirage, a flood, migrations and bloods- the history
are written in discarded codes, and never sucedes!

Who's me, who takes ignorance as strength?
Who's me, who confuses order out of anarchy?
Who's me, who is educated to be upstanding?
Who's me, who is struggling to find me?

Henry Tong

Mirror Image

My world and I are separated
by a crystal clear mirror-
which duplicates my body and soul
and imprints them in the world.

Somehow I begin to impersonate
myself, indulged by the man
on the other side, far from reach.

When lights shed upon my image
I'm filled with ecstasy;
when darkness averts my body
I'm engrossed with rage.

An inverted world has nothing
but reality, which I'm not allowed
to observe, if I stand upright.

I see Time is measured by the specks of dust
that accumulates on the mirror, blocks my sight.
I grow as fogs of mystery unfold, as fairytales
are doomed, as judgement goes poor, as sentiments
can be fooled, and logic dismissed.

Who shall then survive in the society
and help others clear their mirrors.

I once read my real self raw, unpolished,
unaffected, poorly calculated, but
optimistically poetic,
in the clear mirror;

I now earn myself a facade, a silken tongue,
a wrinkled smile, a diploma, but also
a withered dream caged in avarice,
in the dusted mirror.

Dust kills the clearness of mirror
attributing me a settled uncertainty,

a shattered identity, a fake presumption
that in some days,

I know where my real self rests upon.
I know when reflections of life resurrect.
I know how truth and light are unveiled.
I know who to dust off the obscure, who
stops the world from idling its ground.

Now I strive to gaze into the aperture
of the dust, and, when a tint of sunbeam
projects light onto the mirror, reflecting
the old image blocked in a century,
I wonder, in a false illusion,

"Is that Me? "

Henry Tong

Mist

In an alley it permeates
casting on me a facade
I cannot see.

Its thickness quilts
people with blindness and
bruises my skin.

Its talons clasp
my image, my being,
down into abyss.

I swallow the moisture
of clamor in a crowd;
I sip insipidity.

There is no acquaintance
if the mist of moral
veils humanity.

But once I walk out
of the darkest scheme
I set the world free.

Henry Tong

Moon And Glass

Filled with Emptiness,
the Glass sparked a shimmer
of the hazy moonlit,
veiled by shadows of cloud.

Once glittered, a call to commit
Distant was clamor and crowd.
Truth was craved in soberness,
that one may lose its front.

Was truth a truth when all were wrong?
Was darkness endured in all men's ground?
Was awakening soul a hard companion to be found?
Was a glass of moonlit vintage or feint?

Moon and Glass, objectified emotions
flaunted and haunted in evanescence.

Happiness wandered
on the brim of depression-
for Time had arranged
its solo revelation.

Brightness waned
into tints of darkness-
for it should abide
with a test of endurance.

And Answer was sought
in the midst of puzzlement-
in the shimmering minds
of a solemn emptiness.

Henry Tong

My Stubbornness

Stubbornly

I hand my heart to the chaotic beats:
the sirens will deafen the world
instead of me.

Resigned,

They would transform into fish
eyeballs bulging towards agony,
brains documenting the 7-second memory.

Out of water

a Greater land emerged outside me:
evolution defied decadence
when lungs in storms out-breathed.

Alone,

I struggled in the verge of experiment
until atop on the soil, I crept my feet
and found green shades my company.

Henry Tong

Neon Lights

Shifting, falling
raining colors from the sky
wiping tears of disgrace
off from fantastic sight
that endured by days
celebrated by nights,

Darkness loved pretence in
hallucination, innocent
of remembrance, and lights
happened to conspire.

I walk against darkness
beseiged under neon light.
Farther end diminished
where sun would rise,
where scorching heat
would baptize me, where
neon lights extinguish
for vaning sentimentality.

Henry Tong

On World Poetry Day

Scattered words,
like fallen petals
sound foreign
in the early spring.

They erect, but bodiless,
as deranged symbols
unable to decode
the sphere of humanity.

In verses they record
desolation in vanity,
desperation in complacency-
a sacrifice to solemnity.

They shake souls of the benighted,
but recluse along in loneliness.
They hearken light with deference,
but seek long a soul compassion.

With power in mind and soul,
they are embedded in poetry's soil,
thus uplifting us to the zenith,
with an emblazened pen, and toil.

Henry Tong

Overflow

Thoughts overflowed,
Eyes blurred
stream on the window.

Candles dimmed,
distance approached
a mere infinity.

Henry Tong

Parting

We part when it rains; when the petrichor
Tastes mild in the moist air, and summer breeze
Flees across the white waves. Distance blurs
In dawns and dusks, flashes in ears and eyes.
In floods of my string tempo stops and soars,
In fevers of my dream cadence falls and rolls,
Till melted ice cuddles the dearest rose.

In lofty wills, how powerless am I
To seek a change in ephemeral lives.
Sailing in the tide of moral souls I
Grab the transience in decrepit heights.
Yet time weeps not for parting lengths,
Setting sun earlier in Sydney sands.
How lonesome to have miles as friends.

Of slights glimmer, I embrace
Our futures journey to the brightest fate.
I resist not my tears in departing awakes
When you glance back in the bustling bay
The sorrows of love rise like a plume of smoke.

And I gently cup it in my hand and keep it flow.
In the furthest end out of my window, there you
Sit, pick up a pen, drawing memories that linger
In your throat. With blessings to us all, I write to
You, pray for our meets and let it go aloof.

Till June, when it rains and you arrive
Again in my dream, breathing winter hymns
And summer breeze.

Henry Tong

Pulse Of Truth

When my arms are feeble,
I write the strongest words
each immerses in blood
welling out of my world.

Those words may speak
for themselves, even
when days are bleak
and justice becomes uneven.

My heart holds my pulse,
my weakened, but unstopping pulse,
until lies cease their rampage,
in which guilt is justified.

Words will have meant nothing-
as coarse and empty as a blow of wind.
But the world will have remembered
the hoarse roar that pronounces its fate.

Bystanders would moan - ethos lower
their heads to empathize the pathos
and logos - still - mean nothing.

Then, if 'nothing' itself
stores a 'meaning'
my last breath
lasts not
in vain.

Henry Tong

Reason Trialed

My reason was tried by my rage.
I devoured ice on dancing flames.
I landed safe on brittle quakes.
I blessed their soul when they thrashed my fame.

Yet reason did not stop rampage
nor with patience could it assuage.
But violence bred if lacked a sage
soul v. soul would then engage.

Those knights had knelt down by their arms
whose spirits colluded with their charms.
By now my reason had outwon my brawl
and resigned to suppression that befell.

Henry Tong

Reflecting History

History is a sigh on the Wailing Wall
where suffering is washed by the storm.
History is a revolution standing tall
where the fallen bodies are still warm.

When silence permeates the violet sky
freedom summons the unyielding bellows.
Yet with the deafening cry of martyrs
power rests in prayers and gallows.

From Han to Tang, Maurya to Mughal,
Parthian to Safavid, or Rome to Medieval
civilization calculates its precise steps
and is pushed by wisdom of novel.

As empires decay and republics breeze
the world is shaping the crawling people.
As trade expands and culture breeds
the people is shaping transforming world.

Time connects the footprints of soils
and guides a way to renew the impossibles.
Eyes engage in the shrinking globe
and communicate future with invisibles.

I am also part of history, living as
a spark of flame that extinguishes even.
but I know the tremendous power inside
would burst forth with knowledge given.

When history accelerates in dazzle
and people are tired to chase.
I can look back where it started
and find my direction in my place.

Henry Tong

Reminiscence

Traces of past are fading
like the lurking snow.
What stays when wind is blowing
only chrysanthemum knows.

Henry Tong

Speak Out Silence

Silence dwells at both ends
of the language hierarchy.
A soundless bellow can destruct
a bloodcurdling scream.
But those who have been obedient
to dogmatic regime,
Who moan weakly and swallow
tears in horror dream,
Has forgotten the endowed power
that keeps their last esteem:

To Harness Silence,
and Loose its reins,
Let it Gallop,
and Subdue its pains-
For refrain of guilt
must be restrained
And wild cries for crime
must be reigned.

Choose Silence, for the politest protest;
Choose to Speak, for the forceful quest.
Speak Out Silence, and you may admire
the call of justice bellowing in the air.

Henry Tong

Stories Told (Excerpt)

Beyond the truths ascertained,
The myriad crowds behold—
As the deadliest pretense won't amend
A living story told.

A phantom haunts all glores behind,
and breaks us loose from chain.
Lest not people to the least remind,
Freedom in domain.

Henry Tong

Storm In Desert

Storm arrives
at the vast desert.
Sands deformed
into coarse raindrops.
Cactus shivered
a scarlet exotic flore.

Puzzled caravans
strayed feeble camels
to ashen cheeks of dune,
praying, in a forgotten kaaba,
for a mirage of oasis forlorn.

Looming was the roar of wind,
and rage under dying calm.
Daylight worthed not to be shrined
unless faith was a bewildered breath.

Storm arrived
at the comforted hearts,
Souls deformed
by the unquenched thirst.
Life shivered
a song in tune nevermore.

Henry Tong

Summer Caprice

Softly landed her
silver
streaked
hair.

Alternating colors
downpoured on my face.

Flickering light,
frothing shade,
smartphone screen
hides no emotion.

Like a dark silhouette
in the motionless water.

Like a fiercest strike
of a flattened thunder.

Light outruns
age, calm and composed,
and never falters.

Henry Tong

The Anxious Brows

You are the anxious brows
when the eyes are catching flame
when they wink in fashion
but lose sight in contented names.

They see the flags arise in mounts;
they gaze at the grandeur of Space.
The lens has too long stuck in them-
until the real world is erased.

They live a life in a phantom of glory
and salute to the glasses, Hooray Hooray!
But you see clearly, aren't you, Brows?
They conform to being preys.

The instant sensation, the groundless rage,
the inflating arrogance, the ebbing shame.
You can feel what eyes should see,
take off the glasses, and refuse to be tamed!

Henry Tong

The Lone Sober Mind

Lingering
in the strawberry fumes
a drunk among the drunk
is sober.

The lost key in the air
the mumbles at the chair
the truth dictated fair
are sober.

And the ostrich,
buries its head
raw into the sand
to remain sober.

Suffocating sobers
are sobers, intoxicated
by the sobers
in the fume, in the bar.

I, the record keeper,
thence ask for a sober mind
who solemnly observed all
but were labeled 'drunk'.

Muttering
a crazy language, they
gathered to drink a potion
of poetry, not alone.

Henry Tong

The Road Grows With My Feet, A Villanelle

In darkness we trip, and roads may mislead
to where destined is not forged to reach
I thus go, and the road grows with my feet.

When in all but your eyes sunlight is a sin,
And its gleaming guilt pricks the defiant eyes,
In darkness we trip, and roads may mislead.

I might as well caution against a futile risk-
Like quenching thirst in every drop of rain,
But I go, and the road grows with my feet.

While a fawning disgrace fieriest words read,
and with outpouring turmoil, reason becomes vain
In desperation we trip, and roads may mislead.

But trailblazers fear not the stone-carved creed,
and march on in every inch of treacherous terrain
I thus go far, and the road grows with my feet.

I feel the breeze when time transcends history.
Its power winds through, if only short in glory.
In darkness we trip, and roads may mislead,
I thus go far, and the road grows with my feet.

Henry Tong

The Ultimates

If hope does not swelter
into dropless ocean
If freedom does not freeze
in the unfathomable abyss
Our lives would not
have been attested
by the Ultimates.

If the Great Flood breached
our dam of morality,
If silent prayers in Kabah
were noised by impiety,
If the Analects was burnt
and shattered into ashes;
If the storm of Shiva passed
leaving nothing but treaches-
I ask you all, what you believe in.

Invictus, Hercules,
strong amongst the strongest;
Gilgamesh, Sundiata,
wise amongst the wisest.
Yet sadly a page of myth merely
they were carved or imprinted.
I ask you all, why you come here.

A tiny speck of atom
hides a universe of quarks;
A immense solar system
hides twofold: light and dark.
The sprint of a leopard
outwins Not a gazelle's race,
which cannot beat a bicycle,
a car, a train, a plane,
a spaceship, a transpace.
I ask you all, what the measure is.

Questions after questions,
tiring after tiredness,

labor after bildungsroman:
survival of the fittest.
When gospels lost their gloss
When spirits driven by blood
When pursuit became a devoid

I shall then ask you all,
where you are going.

Henry Tong

The Unfinished Art

I never aspired to a dream full of violet stars,
each shining and glistening my lonely night afar.
I've polished my shoes, and chosen my favorite tie,
yet without my audience they do not deserve an eye.

The trips I've conquered, as much as my ages entice,
have stifled my breaths, rolling my life a dice.
And there she arrived with a bouquet in her hand
for the love so remote, yet so close my mind would land.

Insofar as my insomnia t'where I tend,
whichever the broken thoughts distance cannot mend,
I see the violet flowers flow, fragrance starts
like a purple rhapsody would once stir my heart.

She wraps her mind, wishing it would thus restore
the youngest blood that age cannot deplore.
Flowers will wither, their buds might bloom sore,
against the drought of desert, and thunder of Thor.

But in every violet star, a second, an iota of dust,
witnessed a day, a month, a shared glowing dusk.
In lines I wrote, In dreams I promised my heart,
to much willing, a closed loop, an unfinished art.

Henry Tong

The Universe In Obscura

I had woken in a picture,
and drunk a toast with me outside,
who, with surprise, stared at my soul
when I'm frozen to a slide.

Bone tired was I impersonating
a graceful frame in tableau,
Time had been remote to nature
and memory, a *deja vu*.

When curtain drew and light withdrew
the splendid stars were in my sight-
floating, falling, 'bove the chamber
till a vacuum cleaner held their flight.

Newton's Laws were long forgotten-
by whom my motion was surceased?
Higher figures must be present-
they determined where I'd be.

My sorrow lingered, my soul prayed
but no one answered my dismay;
I dwelled alone in "universe,
who else would hear my puzzled verse?

I had been caged for centuries,
and my outside, a fantasy;
My wine dried up, so did my dream,
an unfathomable "detainee";.

There I was to share the story,
a hilarious joke to the world.
When observing celestial beauty,
I'd think dust above the floor.

Henry Tong

Thoughts In Summer

Blue-fallen sky-
silent-like the wuthering sands-
whiffled- the solitary blossom
off- from spring branches.

A burning message- brightened-
the sheds of shade- dizzied-
the widening ght
piercing in my chest- glowed-
like a flash- dropping its weight.

In the midst of greenery-
roaming summer air- with rejuvenated
colors- flowed in newborn wings-
bidding farewell- to the cold mist.

Henry Tong

Till Late Snow Lands In The Cloud (???)

Late snow lands
in the Clouds of distant Mountains,
arousing my drowsiness.

Cold frost blurs
the twofold path in front of me,
where bamboo strips stop to grow
and birds start to flee.

The wind lingers 'round
the bare branches, whose gloomy shade
casts on the shivering screen.

A pavillion stands in loneliness,
away from willows of green;
The grasses losing their gloss,
are buried in the light smoke.

But the Sun has soothed
the lichen in the steps,
and magnolia buds
are ready to burgeon.

From the drowsiness I dream
of the upcoming spring,
so that the coldness in winter
is brought back by wind.

Original Piece in Chinese

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Henry Tong

Waiting

When time becomes an indefinite measure,
I hold every heart beat firm, for I know
When flower blooms fresh buds and dies,
I remember its eternal fragrance.

Though tender, paltry, weak,
us with time, in vain competing;
I never, ever lose the faith
if something is worth waiting.

Born tired waiting, am I, in an endless phase,
until all lies become truth to rely upon-
If promises wither on a temperamental face,
and tragedy incurs, and smiles forgone-
Love is the castaway angel hovering above.

If then, I say, time is treasure,
let there be endurance and love assured
against the odds of tumult and storm,
against the curse of decaying norm,
outliving a life that we'd implore-

Thus waiting is forgiven, in joy or woe.

Henry Tong

We Wander Along The Winding Wall

We wander along the winding wall.
Our words are muted by the star.
In every step, our shades grow tall.

We are pebbles stirring space afar.
Our wavelets join in anxious dreams
faster we ride than a chasing scar.

We ford our stories in the streams,
slipping slow by a strike of chime.
Our thoughts outreach the softest beams.

We guard against the with'ring time.
We die to strive, but live by a call,
An eternal gaze, a night so sublime.

Henry Tong

When Evil Grows Into Mosses

When Evil Grows into Mosses

Original Chinese Version:

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Henry Tong

Writing In The Smog, A Sonnet

Dawn unveils dazzling brilliance in a glance,
As surging afflatus bypass my hand;
How short for me to seize glowing sunrise,
Against reincarnation of dark night?

Nameless shade, in bewilderment, impairs
My muffled stars, like phantom, disappears.
I weigh down the lightness, the smog enfolds;
It dulls out the brightness, which I behold.

Lift the mask, in this false masquerade;
Life is but in blue smog the smogless grace.
Which minds akin would meet lofty face,
Have 'tis voyage-stained in hasty pace.

Who frees himself from lies must bear the whine,
As the nation grows grace in smog with guise.

Henry Tong

Years Elapse (?)

Impalpable dust on the minute hand
vibrates, and thus, its echo
enlongates the trace of remembrance.

Confusion drifts like indispersible
fog, and the slightest vestige of time
that never fades away, evaporates
in the wake of next dawn.

I'd like to be the impalpable dust
and, with my powerless power, rotate
the minute hand and the planet Earth,
then, transcend to the waning darkness
where adolescence collides with age.

Aging, in despair,
I stand in front of my shadow,
letting memory penetrate
a year of insomnic sorrow-
time vanishes into thin air
but leaves its everlasting trace.

Chinese Original Version:

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Henry Tong