

# Ouyang Yu

Translated by Huang Dan and Ouyang Yu

## DON'T SAY

How lonely you are  
There are so many trees around you  
Standing so apart  
That they never communicate with each other in the dark

When you walked home late at night  
Someone shoveled up the embers from the fire pan  
You had a feeling  
That *that* was life

Just as you entered the door  
Your shadow made a noise  
You looked back and saw that it was the homeless dog  
It was then that you thought, of writing this poem

SINKING INTO DARKNESS

I can tell you  
That I may not be long in this world  
But I am laughing  
So are you

I can tell you  
That I may not be long in this world  
But what does it matter if  
I can finish writing this poem as I am driving home

I can tell you  
That I may not be long in this world  
I won't know what happens after  
Only you do

I can tell you  
That I may not be long in this world  
And that my darkness falls before you  
For which you should feel happy

I can tell you  
That I may not be long in this world  
And that this hand that holds the mouse  
Will soon become hollow, reduced to the bones

I can tell you  
That I may not be long in this world  
Leaving as swiftly as the cancer cells  
Soon to be larger than darkness, smaller than it, than nothingness

SUNDAY, AUGUST 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2004

At 4.09, Sunday afternoon, August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2004

It was raining heavily outside

The rain was heard inside the house

Ouyang Yu was typing

Writing this poem

The bell rang for the oven in the kitchen

The sound of Olympic Games filled the living room

Ouyang Yu had been translating at home all day

The sky turned grey, it turned yellow

The light was on in the house

When Ouyang Yu finished writing the poem

It was 4.12, Sunday afternoon, August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2004

FLYING CLOSE TO THE EARTH

As a writer  
you are no nobler or humbler  
than anyone

You fly close to the earth at night  
eyes unbedazzled  
by the world of desires

You talk with those who don't read  
about things that have nothing to do with reading  
you fly close to the water

You see every lonely heart mo  
ving you see the falling age  
sinking into boredom at a faster pace

The good virus that kills better than SARS  
every patient better dressed than at any other time  
you fly close to the skin

Listening to the dead soul dying again under the skin  
for a writing man  
being forgotten is your posthumous royal title

THE LIGHTS

I switched on all the lights  
In this not-too-large room  
I switched on all the lights  
Two lamps on the head of the bed  
One lamp on either side of the mirror on the opposite wall  
One lamp standing in a corner  
These tube-like milky-coloured lamps  
And an incandescent lamp by the bedside  
I switched them all on  
They didn't know why I  
Switched them all on  
In this transient 4.5-star room  
The night fell fast

WINTER

Everyday with me the fly suns himself  
On the window-sill of this room

Long dead he is  
But I am still living

IT'S GOING TO SNOW

The typing fingers have invaded the coldness before snowing  
Snow still, snow still  
A poem across the sky  
Admired, un-admired, covering all depths and shallowness  
No possibility of misreading  
Entering poetry, entering the world  
Lower than earth  
Earlier than falling

RAVINGS

Kill me

Include me in no anthologies

Forget me

Consider me as a non-human being, a non-poet

Mention me not on your lips

Use no good words on me that you use on others

Reject me from history again and again

Purge me thoroughly from the stomach and the intestines

I wake up from reality

It is poetry raving