

Ouyang Yu

THE MOST UNWANTED MAN

he moved among the books  
glancing from cover to cover the way he is used to doing  
from fruit stand to vegetable when he goes to the market  
or when he goes to a jewelry shop  
where he wonders why he's there  
the names the titles the photos  
of the famous and infamous people  
he kept his lips tight shut  
and thought there was someone behind him watching  
turning around he saw rows and rows of printed images staring at him  
in dumn accusation:

why are you here?  
got anything to buy?  
if not why here at all?

he felt for the fifty dollar note in his pocket  
and told himself that he would not buy anything  
he did not know why  
only vaguely that he would never buy anything that did not contain  
his own writing  
selfish yes  
narcissistic yes  
but the paradox is that he never wrote anything  
how can he buy his own writing  
he laughed inwardly at his own absurdity  
of regarding something being written as having been already published  
something like the title of this poem  
*The Most Unwanted Man*  
a novel that he has seen published by Penguin or Angus & Robertson  
or Faber Faber or whatever claims to be a good publisher  
featuring the total view of a back turned upon the world

a multiple back that contains the man's childhood adulthood and old age  
in the shape of inner rings of a cut tree  
the book begins with something like this:

i can't understand why i was born but suppose i had to be born after all because it was by  
pure accident that they had me

the words reminded me of lines I was composing yesterday on my way  
back from uni when I thought how accidental my life was  
inhabiting a body that was borrowed from some/ bodies else  
that when I surprises upon them those listless strangers waiting for their  
buses home how like an accident I must have looked to them

but let's get back or go on  
did it come out of an interior rejection of things at large  
a denial of everything unattached to you  
and something alien in yourself

he is now quite aware of the change in tone and the point of views  
in the branching of the poem  
and diagnoses these as  
a bewilderment of not knowing what to do  
with himself yourself myself  
for being unwanted

## UNTITLED

The quietness of Melbourne hit me hard  
On arrival from adults packed Sydney  
A woman with Asian features wearing flowery blue skin-tight trousers  
Standing on one heel like an inverted 7  
A woman with Asian features kissing with her head tilted back a man on the mouth  
In the café where I was having a latte  
Each street corner seems shopfronted with an adult bookshop  
A woman with Asian features paired with a man with Caucasian features  
We talked about the punky 1970s  
The woman said little  
In a bar of beer stained music—  
In the quietness that hit me hard  
I began to wonder about the futility of poetry  
The ultimate meaning of writing  
As compared with the infinite possibilities of sex making  
In adult stained Sydney