



## ZHENG MOHAM WANG

### Scape

Again, premonitorily  
her profile escaped me  
the moment I helped the easel,  
made from coffins and rivets,  
to erect like a human.  
Like every mannequin,  
I imagine a position inexistent.  
A silhouette of the dark  
oozing until a faint stimulus  
similar to her warmth is  
felt inch, by inch, caressing  
as an old burnt paint  
from the Venetian blinds  
in a room where we smoked,  
lit by the first art of the day.  
A strand of hair dawned  
on my canvas stretched  
like a somnambulist.



## The Funeral

They mourned him in whispers  
as if they had done that eternally  
in their life, chanting and waiting to crumble from the knees  
only to steal some rest and gossip.

Many of them were old.

The bodies lowered to his level of dormancy  
The plastic lenses dangled on his bulging bridge, thrusting  
as life escaped him, the skeleton of a deflated balloon.

I could see his nose out of joint  
for one person was wearing black, not white.  
He asked for an ethnic burial as an atheist by document,  
and grandma nodded in agreement  
to every progression of mourners.

The casket with one screw upheld glossy, smoothened,  
and manufactured like his radio to be buried along.  
Anachronistic shrouds only and for all to open the casket  
for the final examination—*is it final?*

Envelopes, radio, and toothbrushes, and came the hearse.

Only straight men were allowed to flank  
the parade and the chicken were sacrificed  
blood spilled accurately according to a lost cosmology  
around the coffin lid unfit like his abdomen.

An old man's stomach, wrinkled, punctured,  
and now covered in other layers, fresh or dead.

The ritual was modern enough to catch some chill in a temple.

At the end of the parade was the boy in black



I reminisced, who looked like me in my 20s  
He sobbed and later sniffled a lot, almost negligible,  
not as much a disturbance to the resting crowd,  
but he remained outside the temple roof  
like a priest arriving late but never entered in hesitation.

His fine hair and lips chapped beyond  
the pallor how untanned by the summer here,  
leaving films of tears crossing the bridge  
and my vision blurry as the season straddled.

--Summer was here,  
Grandpa was not dead yet, not until I saw the boy.  
His eyes reminded me of healthy sponges,  
and I envied him as a dying cactus.  
I couldn't and felt obliged to justify before grandma spoke more.  
He wasn't there to keep me sober and judged.  
In the old days, I would make tea for grandpa  
around this time. I invited the boy to join my routine.  
They both would have to wake up  
from that scourging game of glares.



## **An August Night**

The bed stopped drifting apart  
in time to contain the exact spill  
of a toppled body, not in a trance,  
as I orphaned it to join the cyclical

flux of the artery,  
for which gender of the universe  
to relish enough hydrogen, over-boiled.

And smells of insomnia.

A flaneur to elope and reacquaint  
the over-cafeinated corpus habituating  
the bed as an itinerant seat of evaporation.

Through the tickling steps of a feline,  
I domesticate myself to be a productive  
pond of ripe lilies and striders in a frenzy  
spreading the limbs, without choice,  
on the axis of light and darkness  
without touching the abyss of death.

The eternal death of sex routines.

Falling asleep is ascendancy.



## BIOGRAPHY

**Zheng (Moham) Wang** is a multilingual artist, poet, novelist, and art historian/critic based in Singapore. He graduated from Rice University in 2020 with a B.A. double-majoring in Art History and Studio Art and from California Institute of the Arts with an M.A. in Aesthetics and Politics (Art Criticism) from the School of Critical Studies in 2022. He is currently a Ph.D. student of Art History and Theory at the School of Art, Design and Media at Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, with an NTU Research Scholarship. His poetry and novels are published in Chinese and bilingual magazines such as Voice and Verse Poetry (Hong Kong), Vineyard Poetry Quarterly (Taiwan), China Daily (Taiwan), Tsingtao Literature (China), Youth (China), and Rice Magazine (Houston, TX). His poetry has won awards internationally, and he is recently writing in English, Chinese, French, and his ethnic mother tongue, Iu-Mien, a Hmongic language native to the Iu-Mien people living in southwestern China and Southeast Asia. More at [www.mohamstudio.com](http://www.mohamstudio.com).