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Mathematician's Morning (2013)

Translated by Chung Eun-Gwi

“REALLY REALLY NICE”

Suddenly I sang a song loudly
Like an old car running out of fuel.

You continued the next line loudly
Our stride must have looked like marching.

When two sing the same song
their mouths get the same shape,
at the same time
at the same street.

Or turning the corner,
they can say the same thing at the same time
“Wow, it’s a full moon!”
stuff like that.

They share the same deception that
their dream will not be refracted
even if they turn the corner.

Or you can put gloves on
a snowman sweating excessively
like you put a flower in an armored vehicle.

Streetlights are out
Our shadows fade away.
After we turn that corner, let's be ghosts.
Like a lizard crawls with a flower in its mouth
out of a garbage can leaning against the wall.

We promise to believe only in hidden things,
like a corpse kept behind the stage
We become each other's back.
It was really really nice.

From the knees of lovers who went through every possible fight drifts an indefinable fishy smell, the smell of a beast no one should know about. About to say *I'm scared*, she ends up saying *I'm fine*. When they mix up rice together, crashing spoons, their days of the past are mixed in red. Each other's future sharply shines at each other's nape like a spearhead. About to say *it's perilous*, she ends up saying *it's precious*. When one becomes shabby to the other, the two sluggishly change their bodies and pass the heavy afternoon. In the eyes of lovers who shared every possible confession, indefinable affliction is inscribed one by one. Reflecting the affliction that nobody should know about as fascination, each other's eyes are suffering, or scenery. About to say, *you're becoming my one and only nightmare*, she instead rises to do the dishes. A sperm whale floats out of the tap water. Dipping their fingertips in the deep sea, she thinks about red blood confined to blue veins, thinks about being dissolved and being dyed. The evening gets splattered. In the room of the lovers who completed every possible love, unknown plants grow to touch the ceiling, giving off an indefinable murky fragrance. From the enormous fruits nobody should know about, pus-like juice drips down. About to say *Oh my God*, she ends up saying *Lovely*.

DAWN

A scary beast is walking. A scary forest hiding a scary beast is walking. Shrieks of scary birds concealing the roars of a scary forest are spreading.

From there, the sun sluggishly is rising up.
Needle-leaves lose the chill air and grow pointier.

How will the screams grow sharper?
Right before the round bubble burst, I heard a scream.
I wish this scream could eat into the city.

Words that were so overused walk toward failure.
It seems the time to shut up has already passed.

Over the forest's scars, toes grow like mushrooms. Somewhat similarly to the screams. The sun arrives before the moon disappears. As if they must stick together while it is still possible to do that.

The tree walks on its roots and stands in front of me.

It's scarier than a scary beast.
Scary things always use their feet first. Feet are scary.
Feet know only of fatigue and can never be discouraged.

IF THE FUTURE SPILLS DOWN

I want to become a faraway place.

Like a child with one ear pressed to the railway track
listening to the sound of a faraway place.

What should I do to become a place farther away?
In my dream I could become even a child.
I could dream a nightmare.

Becoming a child whose body keeps shaking like a compass needle
I get afraid I may have done something wrong.
Becoming a child whose body keeps fluttering like a flag
I get afraid I may have fallen into a silly love.

With the heart of the first-born pup
who lived for just ten days
With the heart of a child on her way to make a grave
holding its still warm body in her arms

I will wake up from my dream.

I would become a child who comes to know
that her mom who spanked her shouting
Don't cry, don't cry,
was in fact feeling like crying herself.

In such moments, children come here
to wave their hands at strangers.

In a dream it would be a brief send-off,
Unfortunately this is not a dream so they

Become adults in that spot, waiting for somebody.
In the end, having forgotten what they were waiting for

With the heart of a child tanned dark
Who waved at a train passing by

Now I want to become a train passing by.

I want to know that children waving for no reason
still exist everywhere.

BLANKET'S INSOMNIA

You look like
someone who falls asleep to put his blanket to sleep

Nestled in your arms
the green blanket tosses and turns little by little.

Like someone
taking the poison from things they used to hold
and moving it into their own body,
you make the face of someone thinking of a far distant place.

Instead of straightening out your tail or your head
like a poisonous insect
you always raise the corners of your mouth

Like someone putting a blanket to rest
your sleep is round.
Big and small circles of sleep
bubble up in your perimeter like soap bubbles.

You lie on your side
fallen in deep sleep
with two hands pressed together like one in prayer
Please, I beg you.

This is not a dream
When not speaking, it seems to be the last confession you ever
left behind
and so I take it to be a request.

Blanket lies down like the Reclining Buddha at the Emerald Temple
It touches your skin.
Your skin is the first to wake from light sleep.

Now a day is walking in a hunched back,
folding its hands behind like an old man
picking up the used cardboard boxes.

I picked up a shiny pebble.
Holding firmly the complete warmth
inside a complete round in my hand,

I walked through the alley of ten years ago.
The same persimmon trees, the same bathhouse building,
the same playground,
and the same broken toys.

I picked up a doll
And gently stroked its angelic face
that looks like a devil with one eyeball missing.

I need a piece of news,
news saying nothing has happened.

Too many leaves were falling,
but the cry for their lives
was not heard.
Like the deaf sign language,
leaves are falling down all day long.

It needs to be more darkened
For me to see all the soft lights
For me to find a way to my old house
with more soft lights.

Though nothing has arrived yet,
I stop praying on the spot where I stand,
as if meeting a person I've waited for.

Gleaning a day ten years ago, I put it in my pocket.
The night has come back safe.