

## **Tang Danhong**

Translated by Eleni Sikelianos and Jennifer Feeley

### **From Pears to Butterflies**

A gown's lapel slips from springtime's waistline to the ankles  
I see summer's full rumps, embarrassed and sweating  
I see the photoflash flash and flash, perfectly round, slightly sour  
autumn pears copiously occupy the free market, their butts  
slapped by long poles, some violently shaken in both hands

What holds up the pear-shaped part of the body?  
An undisciplined Phoenix bike gripped between thighs  
I see the axles spin round and round, lubricating oil lovingly pushed  
oh, inflated, like rubber-flavored wheels catapulting  
their rumps brushing the Phoenixes as they brush past

Aside from the specter of pears here's a sparkling violin  
She puts her hands on her breast tenderly asks for the conductor's signal  
I see strings tighten and tighten, long bow and both hands demand a trembling overtone  
I see in rubbing she draws out wings, exposing the naked shape of the butterfly  
oh, one grain, then another, egg-laying butterfly, touches upon their suffering

### **The Invisible Rose's Sleeve Dabs the Windowpane**

The night large in stature made of pitch-black compassion  
just turned over

The red curtain twists its waist halts at the corner  
The white curtain rips open the garment's bodice – rip  
A flat terrain, translucent glass breast  
laid bare to boss, secretary with a tearing crack

Glass breast oh, glass, you won't believe it

Sunlight has waded through tears, kisses the eyes' squint  
With bright feet, wine steps to the bottom of the heart

The copy machine glances backward beguilingly, her agitated paper tongue  
unfurls in the writing desk's private cavity, she spins

Gold ringed tooth, high voltage tooth

kissing, a kiss that is both light and white, right?

Since ink is dripping down  
fouling the official virginal white lace underwear missive  
why doesn't 8 o'clock to 11 bulge high noon?

Glass breast oh, glass, you're trembling  
The invisible rose escorts you through the night  
You are wanton, and dawdle too

The invisible rose has hung up the phone  
The invisible rose sobs in my heart

The invisible rose has her emergencies  
The invisible rose's sleeve dabs the windowpane

Glass breast oh, glass, I said  
"Only the flickering body holds rough milk"

How could I be wrong?  
Shouldn't the rose be pinned on your left breast?

### **Queen of Oblique Lines**

Who are those two facing each other  
(one on the left, one on the right)  
Who has ever had a good heart-to-heart?  
It's by no means breaking waves or parents  
Because father pinches rotten peaches  
the eddy drowning his middle finger  
Who (one taller, one shorter) declares:  
a knife captures the enemy  
a bandage wraps the food  
Because mother takes a step, draws closer  
she falls ill from nursing angels, her rotten torso  
stumbling: a slope leaning toward the sun

She straightens the sweet wave-lines  
makes fruit from two roll into one  
she says: let flowers justify the spiral  
let father shake the crippled tree  
she gives tribute, a box on the ears  
so the brackets' left side faces the vacancy, the right side's omission  
she says: don't bury yourself in my chest sobbing  
as tears might soak my back  
She has exhausted symmetry, her rotten torso

a yawn: a slope leaning toward the sun

Like the tango, that somber pause,  
a strong wind hugs pounding rain, sinking  
as fireworks arcing into the night sky descend  
blood in wolfish joy strikes out  
Yet you, you are an angel's ravening skeleton  
how can you not be grateful for her food

Like rays of light dangerously jutting out from the hips  
her torso: from 20,000 above sea level to the center of the eddy  
all-rotten  
all-slanting