

# Yang Lian

## Stroller

*from Lee Valley Poems*

Whether the golden fish sing about the rise and fall of the city or not  
a line of swans on the riverbank study the book of their feathers  
whether they model girls with mirrors or not  
the stroller's self is filled completely by the sound of the wind  
    led by a pitch-dark street  
towards this stretch of marshland where feet sink in an inch  
the banks overflow with green which knows winter's weakness only too well  
after the rain the grassblades kneel on broken knees  
one cloud invents an eclipse  
the horizon watches him abruptly change between light and dark  
    breeding a night  
    in which a wild goose calls him continuously  
towards this act of forgetting  
feeling softly swallowed by the valley  
feeling he has already become the valley an empty willow  
whose golden explosion throws out a womb endlessly giving birth to the sky  
    listening to the wooden fence shout in the wind  
    so nailed to death it stops the day  
he arrives at the shared wetness of water and blood  
where drowning waits the chattering future a little bar  
with a locked door he is the entire city holding a stone cold cup  
    as though planted, panting  
walking further to be buried in the skeleton of an old iron bridge  
walking impossibly further rusty blood-red bushes  
burst through his window ghost-like sunlight appears once  
revealing the swollen dark water-level settled over his head  
    the drowned landscape is here  
    in the dark the separated  
        lonely hanging step is here

*Translated by W. N. Herbert*