

Light and Dark

A dark womb

A day-lit down-town Kow Loon street

The nest of the policeman's cap in which I am carried

The light of an orphanage crib

The passage from East to West

Light to grey

Solid to porous

Complete to incomplete

Sometimes it's so difficult to tell the difference

Dark soy or light soy?

Me or the reflection that never looks back

It's time to sleep

Lights out

Examples of Poetry © Lucy Sheen

No One's Home

With bag she cycles
Round the streets
In and out the dusty lamp-posts
She's going to play

At a friends house

Ding-dong
Pause
Silence
Ding-dong-Ding-dong
Silence
Ding-dong-ding-dong-ding-dong
Pause
Muffled sounds within
Behind the thick frosted front door glass

Through the letterbox she shouts
"I'm hear to play like you said"

Silence
More silence
Long silence

She walks away looks up to the window
Two jack-in-a-box heads disappear

Alone with bag
Biscuits unopened
She mounts her bike
Head held down
She peddles away

Examples of Poetry © Lucy Sheen

China is not a good place to be a bird

Night sweeps across the back of my hand

Car headlights target a rag-tag cluster

Hustling Li* hawking live suppers

Slaty-breasted Rails dangling limply upside down

Resigned to their cooking pot fate

Black crow-billed Drongos

Rawboned Egrets lidless-eyed spinsters primped for a better place than this

Old, young and indifferent

Clutch onto bunches of legs attached to wild birds

Waving the carcasses in a roaring greeting to passersby

A stranger wanders over to inspect the catch

But buys nothing

An ancient vendor with spits and unleashes the words

“Don’t just look! Buy!”

A whistling violet thrush

Raises its beautiful eyebrow

The striking white eye-shadowed Hwamei

And a black-winged Cuckoo-shrike lurks under thick cover

Breaking radio silence with a warbled triphthong

Jasmine crested cockatoos former inmates of Flagstaff House

Fly in feral groups through Hong Kong air space

Freed as the Japanese army approached theses shores in 1941

China is not a good place to be a bird (Con't)

What kind of Chinese bird am I?

Released in 1962 to fly in alien skies

Carrying my own murmuration of starlings

I long to be free screeching across the air

Like the feral cockatoos of Hong Kong.

Examples of Poetry © Lucy Sheen

Why Do Old Chinese People Hoard So Badly?

為什麼中國老人都是囤積狂？

Who are we to judge?
 It's the memories
 Those things
 You never know might come in handy
 So many reasons
 It could be a jar of fermented baby mouse wine
 Empty jars, a precious commodity
 Washed out with care
 Ready to receive Chinese herbs
 For Soup
 Deer tails
 Dried sea horse broth
 Empty chocolate tins
 Empty tubs
 Just how many types of medicated ointment can one person have?
 Poverty makes you eek out everything
 Things were not as plentiful as they are now
 Prosperity doesn't last forever
 It takes just one recession and we're all hoarding money
 Resenting immigrants, people, benefits
 Why do old Chinese people hoard so badly?

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Examples of Poetry © Lucy Sheen

Chinese Numbers

Dover **58**

An airtight coffin

They wanted a better life

Too much to hope for?

Morcambe bay **21**

The devils beach

Pitch black

Desperate

Waiting in vain

Until the tide delivered death

Pingfan **3,000** to **12,000**

Human experiments they were called

Unit **731**, **1644** and **100**

10,000 or more plague infested bags of flesh

Ravaged by untreated venereal diseases

Prostitutes for war **20,000**

Probably more we may never know

Young females barely past their teens enslaved for sex

Cholera

Anthrax

Tularemia

Ate through the living corpses of **400,000**

Unleashed from a lab

Man indeed had become death

Examples of Poetry © Lucy Sheen

Finding out someone you knew has died

A drop of news
Spreads across my life,
Ink bleeding through the page
An event that has gone
An echo
A secret sorrow
Plunging its finger nails deep into my skin
Driving the pain below the dermis
Searing into my blood
Releasing,
Swirling,
Spinning,
Undulating the memories
Regurgitating the taste of happier times
I cannot keep the sluice-gates closed.
I have lost
I don't quite know why this losing is so much greater -
Because it was a first?
Because I moved on too quickly and didn't try?
I should have reached -
Stretched out my hand and grasped
Made my blind fingers walk across the tundra of his face
Caressing and memorising his beauty.
Now all that is left is my imperfect recollection
The space he inhabited
His talent
His joy
This void that once was occupied by
A lovely, lovely man.

Examples of Poetry © Lucy Sheen

Empty Clothes

空的衣裳

Frayed birth

Ragged childhood

Time protrudes seeping through the unoccupied garments

Poking out the worn away elbows

Peeking from behind threadbare knees

Memories darned into little heels

Lost children patched and seamed

Just pictures

Just empty clothes

Examples of Poetry © Lucy Sheen

Grief - 悲伤

Dark

Deep

An emotional duvet

A patched work

Stitched with frayed time

Worn out thread-bare excuses

Guilt woven in and out of the feeling weft

This centre did not hold

The synapse fractured

Flaying the fabric of sensation

Allowing the deep abyss to perforate the cover

Bleeding through the quilt

Staining

Spreading

Creeping

Crawling

Over

In

Under

Out

Variegating the patches

Tinting the needlework

Until the original colour is lost

Examples of Poetry © Lucy Sheen

Grief - 悲伤 (Cont'd)

Sinking

Pulling

Enveloping

Smothering

Examples of Poetry © Lucy Sheen

Ungrateful – A Paper Daughter (extract)

2015

I stand so close . . .

Staring out . . .

Perched on an edge,

Wondering is this the way back to my forgotten home?

Abbey moves back from the edge of the stage. Beautiful
isn't it.

The river Thames.

I come up here to see this view, often -

I love this time of day.

Dusky fingers stroking the veins on my neck,

Watching the female curve of the river,

Kissing the urban sunset.

Wind flirts with the satellite vines,

Bouncing it off the TV woks,

Stir frying media for those who consume the digital noodles

Up here there is an equality I seldom find at street

level. My head and eyes always down.

Watching my feet trample over the free discarded words of
yesterday. My eye catches the path of a single sheet of news,

as the city exhales,

I look up and gaze into the eyes of those who do not share my visual
axis. I can see you, sitting in the dark,

What do you see?

Ungrateful – A Paper Daughter (Con'td)

Eyes following the shape of my face,

Tracing the broad flatness of my

nose, The almond curve to my eye.

I've learnt to see myself through other people's

eyes, A third party facsimile of what everyone else

thinks,

I should be.

When I sit where you are I won't see my likeness.

What thoughts flicker behind those eyes that follow the shape of my face,

Take in the broad flatness of my nose,

Trace the almond curve of my eye. Listen to the English-ness in my voice?

Examples of Poetry © Lucy Sheen

Thursday's Child Has Far To Go (extract)

The English language is such a bugger to master int'it -
Even for those of us born and bred here.

Well, I weren't born here, but I were definitely bred here!

(Pause)

I've been thinking - dangerous I know - but, I'm curious.

Always have been, it's me Achilles heel!

One thing that got me into bother as a young 'un.

(Beat)

Dictionary says,

Adoption:

The action or fact of adopting or being adopted.

Example -

"She gave up her children for adoption."

It intrigues me, the thinking behind the the example:

"she gave up her children for adoption."

Not child, but children -

It sounds so casual -

like putting washing out, or doing the weekly shop.

There were a time when I would have agreed with that way of thinking.

Mother's giving up their children, grist to the mill.

I was brought up to think that way.

The family that adopted me didn't want me to know owt about me adoption.

All I were told was, I were abandoned 'cause me m'am didn't want me.

Examples of Poetry © Lucy Sheen

Come To Where I'm From: London – My EastEnd (extract)

I've been away.
 Not for long.
 Long enough to regain an appreciation for this place I call home.
 To look on with new eyes,
 At the urban Buddha sitting silently on a deconstructed cardboard box,
 next to his pile of unsold Big Issues.
 I've missed this daily walk.
 Following the straight line of the old road.
 Threading my way through the modern day melee of market traders,
 Where lady's fingers rest on green bananas,
 As the shy lemon grass plays hide-and-seek, in between the bak-choi and pak-choi.
 I wonder what was it really like?
 Back in the day.
 Differing tongues, Chinese, Greek, Urdu, Spanish, Russian.
 They rub together like linguistic cicadas.
 Their songs ricochet of the minarets and church spires,
 From the top deck of a double decker bus, fabricated glass fingers point skyward,
 to the eclipses, prefixes, suffixes and all the questions that underline and highlight
 life, like
 'Where do you really come from?'
 It's the gift that keeps on giving.
 Whether it's asked out loud or lurks silently behind an observer's eyes,
 travelling on the tube, pushing past me.
 Cutting me off from the last unoccupied seat on the number eight bus.
 Striding alongside the blind beggar and his dog,
 Stalking me as I meander through barmy park, past what remains of John Kirby's
 beloved Bednal house.
 From stately home to insane asylum.
 Madness amongst the imported plants,
 The Kow-Towing wisteria weeps, next to the undecided cherry blossoms,
 that never quite know when to bloom.
 I pause for a moment of reflection.
 Glancing down the stairwell at Bethnal Green tube,
 Where one hundred and seventy-three tragedies cascaded down the stairs.
 Most of the fatalities are women and children, crushed and asphyxiated.
 Thoughts of mortality hug my back,
 I cross the road and make my way to Niccos Café.
 I sit nursing a mug of builders tea,
 Dunking my thoughts into the past -
 Letting them walk through Ming Street,
 Ride the wake of history, lap the cobble stones that nibble
 the edges of Amoy Place.
 Progress renews the sinews of the old buildings, ironing out the wrinkles,
 Erasing the shadows cast by different races,
 Until all that is left, empty, cold embraces.

Come To Where I'm From: London (Con'td)

Clambering the spiral staircase of history,
Rolling the names over the knuckles of my brain,
I sift through my hand scrawled notes.

The London directory 1716.

Harling John, occupation Chinaman and seller of fine chocolate and superior Teas,

Sharp Joseph, occupation Glass-seller and Chinaman,

I never knew that an ethnicity could be an occupation.

I never knew that so many East Asians had settled in Britain before the 1900s.

Scanning the urban horizon, the fluid motion of memory,

Ripples out over the asphalt sunset,

The migration of keepsakes,

Memories held together in the palm of kissing hands,

You never step on the same piece of pavement twice,

Examples of Poetry © Lucy Sheen

Belong - 歸屬

Belong

Pertain

Appertain

Classified

Part of

My tongue keeps me far away from belonging

On either side of the Great Wall

Neither in

Neither out

Examples of Poetry © Lucy Sheen

I Live In a Vertical Village -我住在一個垂直的村莊

I live in a vertical village
 My eyes are horizontal
 They see the world through double-glazing
 Reading books bound by dust
 I taste the dock water
 I feel the whips tongue licking at my back
 I see rioters, their boots
 I smell their fear
 I see death
 Just history
 I live in a vertical village
 With my horizontal eyes
 Watching the street below through double-glazing
 Ants scuttling beneath
 What do they see, up here?
 Mr. Moto, Charlie Chan, Susie Wong?
 Just entertainment
 I live in a vertical village
 Seeing with horizontal eyes
 Peekers, net-curtain twitchers
 To them I am, "other"
 Ignorance plus fear equals – ME
 Sojourner, Foreigner, Immigrant
 Muffled faces shout "Go home!"
 This is my home
 I live in a vertical village
 I have horizontal shaped eyes
 Watching the world through double-glazing
 I am a Coolie, Vagabond, Stevedore, Trench digger,
 Indentured labourer, miner, guano worker,
 Greeting death with horizontal eyes
 I live in a vertical village
 With my horizontal eyes
 Watching the world through double-glazing
 Marvelling at my daughter
 Who watches me with her baby eyes
 She has inherited her Mother's traits
 Two dark brown horizontal shaped eyes
 Waiting, watching the changing world
 We live in a vertical village