

1976

For a Heart

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Recommended Citation

Hijin, Park and Sung Chankyung. "For a Heart." *The Iowa Review* 7.2 (1976): 23-23. Web.
Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0021-065X.2008>

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For a Heart

For a heart that was torn by bullets in the battlefield,
And slimy like a bloody mop or a blind crawl,
And again cured as if nothing had happened,
But now has grown purple instead of rosy crimson.
For that heart, O, testify and sing.

For a heart that was once immaculate, and at the blue sky
Was a floating cloud, and was a reed pipe
Sobbing to the faintest wind, and in the dream swam innocently
Like a feather or Chuang-Tzu's* butterfly,
For that heart, O, weep and sing.

For a heart that is still pounding like this,
For a heart that in sleep or wake, or in a fast swoon
Never rests—a phoenix fluttering its wings
On self-burnt ashes, a heart with the sun's fire,
For that heart, O, rejoice and sing.

For a heart that, serving a life sentence
Imprisoned in the walls of the chest as dark as our age,
Flickeringly has survived, for a heart
That shall last like our history or our lofty love,
For that heart, O, praise and sing.

Translated by Sung Chankyung

*Chuang-Tzu, an ancient Chinese sage, who wrote an allegory about Chuang Chou who dreamed that he was a butterfly. When he woke up, he did not know whether it was the butterfly who dreamed of Chuang Chou or whether he, Chuang Chou, dreamed of the butterfly.