Writing Sample

Viet Huu Tran

1. A CANDLE POEM

Is it true that candles tend to cry at night?
Reminded of the nameless evenings
Ha Noi's New-Year's-Eve streets
The year dawdless
    but New Year is always in haste
Gardens rushing cherry blossoms
    forever calling the spring

All are done so it seems
Candles have fallen asleep
Dreams have ceased to come back knocking on the door
In solitary flowers bloom uselessly red

Suppose again you're indifferent
For me the spring is there as if it weren't there

(Translated by : Y NHI)

2. COUNTING RAIN

Dreams are yet mine
Fantasies still far from memories

The new season rain misses
Sapphire flashes following to the cot
Joy is like an unfinished card game
Night fades...

Will rain arrive from the longing place?...

(Translated by : Y NHI)
3. COUNTING SEASONS

Hiding from the autumn sitting behind a door
Crumble counting golden autumn leaves
The sunlight’s soul calls out to the South
Autumn is being so much Northern

Season-owed streets look perplexed
My distant beloved, are the streets still in you?
Who has pressed on the last note
that the scale unloads unmelodiously?

Who feels chilled in the evening in place of the fog?
*Autumn strides at loss not knowing the street name*

(Translated by: Y Nhi)

4. THE LITTLE PINK GLASS

The little pink glass
Sings a song into halves
A sad, fragrant pillow absent of cheeks

The blossoming pomegranate in front of the gate
Bubbling rain out in the courtyard
The crimson silk cloth left out in the wind
So who has dropped it...?

So I have dropped it

The little pink glass
An azure ribbon
Falling on the withered-leaf porch

Wandering about the soul
  picks up pieces
  of the sky’s pieces

(Translated by: Y Nhi)
5. BOATHOUSE

Have the lamps fallen exhausted? Yet the trees have drifted into rest
Willows wave unpossessed
Suddenly the familiar hair's fragrance--orphaned

A rendezvous bar
alone
bitter beer
Who said the autumn is deeply in love
That I a lonesome chair

At day’s end don’t sweep too roughly
That love will fly astray in the cold lake breeze

(Translated by: Y NHI)

6. PURPLE THE AUTUMN AFTERNOON RAIN

Wish I were your child
Lulled into sleep in your sun-warm arms
To be unstartled on cold-orphan nights

Let the mite swarm hover the afternoon
Purple dress please don’t languish
A rain drop bursts into halves, a boat floats adrift
To live is to share thirstiness evenly

(Translated by: Y NHI)

7. UNTITLED
Ephemeral dreams choked like green rice lost in black frost
Sowing predestined love late harvests but sorrows
Dampening rain, a love match wouldn’t light

Regretfully losing you like losing a chance
Slipped out of hand

(Translated by: Y NHI)

8. A LOVE ACCOUNT

Please register a heart account
At Joint - stock Banks “Loving you forever”
Kind eyes
  why limit the youthful time?
Pray
  that you won’t go sparkly bankrupt

(Translated by: Y NHI)
9. YING YANG STREET

Street first day. Street full-moon day
Strolling, skipping streets
Happy sad luck hapless...
You can buy if you wish

Street post-office ying yang
Street hell’s bank
Hence... there are the streets
so many years?

(Translated by : Y NHI)
10. EVACUATION DAYS

Evacuation I had yet come of age
Used to sleep in the day and weep at night
Perhaps I was born thirsty for milk

Chewing on grandma’s hidden blouse to suppress lovesickness
Singing, swinging the afternoon autumn hammock
“*You live with grandma, she has no breast*
You live with daddy, he’s a man”
Upon each visit
Often my mother discreetly wiped her tears

Growing up I joined the village children
Learned to tend buffalo, fly kites and clip grass
Warded off the rice-gleaning kids
from the neighboring village
Sun-burnt skin, auburn hair
Who would have thought my home...the city

Ten years grandma’s tomb covered with grass
My heart still autumn still hammock swing
I return to the evacuation site of the past
Memories pour out playfully in alleys
Hide-and-seek for a time at the age of ten
The former poor landlord’s home has turned into a manor
Dollars from a distant cousin
Emigrated to the other ocean shore

How I miss the dreamy, wandering age
So far away is the past
and so blue is the far away

*(Translated by : Y NHI)*

11. IF YOU TURN AND LOOK

Milk flowers are now here, my dear
Returning to the roads the breeze lies gently asleep
If you turn and look
Your hair sways aside, your cheeks are the full moon

Paid off the moon but then I owe the sail
A swift bird in the drenched evening
Please stop looking at me proudly
The autumn almost slips away

If you turn and look
All but one lotus wilts in the pond
Wake up the fragrance for the dead-leaf season

And there is still a piece of my soul that
Gently shivers on the tree tip in the freezing wind

(Translated by: Y Nhi)

12. BLUE RAIN

Branches wept transparent dews
Clear as deep skies of blue
Rain sauntered through alleys
In drops fallen anew

Dreams parted your fragrant lips
Your hidden scent quivered
Bashfully the rain unclothed
Upon your hair, rivered

Innocence hastened into dusk
Reflecting face that lined
You cried no longer, yet
Your smile's sorrow disguised.

(Translated by: Anh Nguyen)

13. SUMMER STROLL
Trees brush their branches mirrored in the streets
Rain’s ceased, the leaves turned to the sun
Blissful, the jammed intersection

The avenue rainbowed
Dreaming of festivities
The train returned to the crowded station
Whistle stifled by its smoke-filled lungs

Peaceful breezes unfurled before eyes unfettered
Tiled roofs lined the pathway as if an allurement.

(Translated by: ANH NGUYEN)

14. FRIENDSHIP

Each of us must one day depart
Let’s treasure our time together
Our friendship borne of hardship
Sibling by birth though we were not
Blood brothers, what we were

Often, each other we misjudged
For self gains, we planned and schemed
Sometime wish we’d never met
Now, the grief increased in folds
Yearnings heaped upon yearnings
Regrets piled upon regrets!
Penitent of missed union
Remorseful of cruel words
Longed for those fleeting happy days forever passed
How short-lived the kind-hearted friends?
Or is Hades lacked gentle spirits
Alas, present now, then swiftly gone.

(Translated by: ANH NGUYEN)
15. MONOTONY

There were days the work seemed monotonous
The phone. Fax. Email. Tiresome.
Migraines. High blood pressure. Cankered gums.
Each day I aged a year
Selling - buying contracts –
Two goats clashing horns on a bridge
Taxes bleed
Getting sanitary rich
Is always still the hardest
To each God bestowed only one talent
Is my source our source?

“One misstep, a life-long regret”
I squandered those youthful years
Now, in threadbare cloths I greet the full moon

(Translated by: ANH NGUYEN)