



第三十屆梁實秋文學獎
翻譯類譯詩組題目

I. 選自 Sarah Howe. *Loop of Jade*. London : Random House UK, 2015.

Sarah Howe (1983 -)

Tame

It is more profitable to raise geese than daughters.

— Chinese proverb

This is the tale of the woodsman's daughter. Born with a box
of ashes set beside the bed,
in case. Before the baby's first cry, he rolled her face into the cinders –
held it. Weak from the bloom
of too-much-blood, the new mother tried to stop his hand. He dragged
her out into the yard, flogged her
with the usual branch. If it was magic in the wood, they never
said, but she began to change:

her scar-ridged back, beneath his lashes, toughened to a rind; it split
and crusted into bark. Her prone
knees dug in the sandy ground and rooted, questing for water,
as her work-grained fingers lengthened
into twigs. The tree – a lychee – he continued to curse as if it
were his wife – its useless, meagre
fruit. Meanwhile the girl survived. Feathered in greyish ash,
her face tucked in, a little gosling.

He called her *Mei Ming*: No Name. She never learned to speak. Her life
maimed by her father's sorrow.

For grief is a powerful thing – even for objects never conceived.
He should have dropped her down



the well. Then at least he could forget. Sometimes when he set
to work, hefting up his axe
to watch the cleanness of its arc, she butted at his elbow – again,
again – with her restive head,

till angry, he flapped her from him. But if these silent pleas had
meaning, neither knew.

The child's only comfort came from nestling under the
lychee tree. Its shifting branches
whistled her wordless lullabies: the lychees with their watchful eyes,
the wild geese crossing overhead.

The fruit, the geese. They marked her seasons. She didn't long to join
the birds, if longing implies

a will beyond the blindest instinct. Then one mid-autumn, she craned
her neck so far to mark the geese
wheeling through the clouded hills – it kept on stretching – till
it tapered in a beak. Her pink toes
sprouted webs and claws; her helpless arms found strength
in wings. The goose daughter
soared to join the arrowed skein: kin linked by a single aim
and tide, she knew their heading

and their need. They spent that year or more in flight, but where –
across what sparkling tundra wastes –
I've not heard tell. Some say the fable ended there. But those
who know the ways of wild geese
know too the obligation to return, to their first dwelling place. Let this
suffice: late spring. A woodsman
snares a wild goose that spirals clean into his yard – almost like
it knows. Gripping its sinewed neck

he presses it down into the block, cross-hewn from a lychee trunk.
A single blow. Profit, loss.



II. 選自 *Poetry Magazine*. Volume 136, number 2, May 1980, p74.

Michael C. Blumenthal (1949 -)

The Flirtation

I am tired of looking at you through this glass.

Up close, I'm sure your eyes are a deeper green,
your hair the scent of lilacs, the texture
of Vermont in September. I am sure
we are in total agreement about the importance
of milkweed, the intrusiveness of money.

I see you cruising the ferns and coffee tables
of this building, eyes beating your forehead
for a glimpse of me, legs a chorus of violins.
You must know I am not really up here working,
that I am holding you like a key to the threatening sky.

I watch you washing other men's hair,
your fingers dancing like ribbons around
their temples. Your breath fills them with foolish
suggestions, makes me want to curl my own hairs
around you, discuss the justice of distances.

At night, two high-priced whores,
we go home to strangers, make love
in satin sheets, sipping imported brandy,
whispering each other's name to the impossible windows.