"On My Deathbed"

Conflict

I want to take another look at the ocean, behold the vastness of tears from half a lifetime
I want to climb another mountain, try to call back the soul that I've lost
I want to touch the sky, feel that blueness so light
But I can't do any of this, so I'm leaving this world
Everyone who's heard of me
Shouldn't be surprised at my leaving
Even less should you sigh or grieve
I was fine when I came, and fine when I left.
Xu Lizhi, 30 September 2014
"Conflict"
They all say
I'm a child of few words
This I don't deny
But actually
Whether I speak or not
With this society I'll still

"I Fall Asleep, Just Standing Like That"

The paper before my eyes fades yellow

With a steel pen I chisel on it uneven black

Full of working words

Workshop, assembly line, machine, work card, overtime, wages...

They've trained me to become docile

Don't know how to shout or rebel

How to complain or denounce

Only how to silently suffer exhaustion

When I first set foot in this place

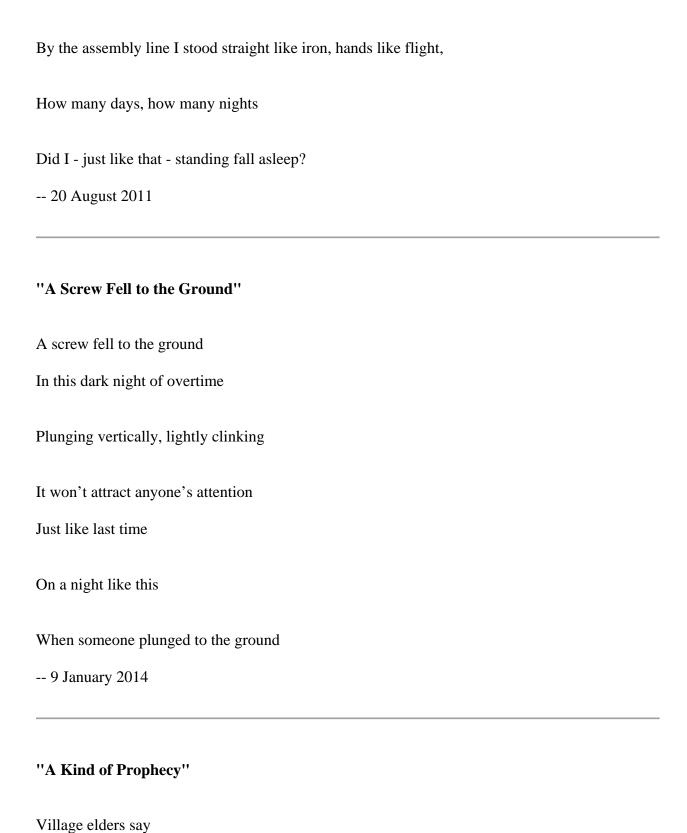
I hoped only for that grey pay slip on the tenth of each month

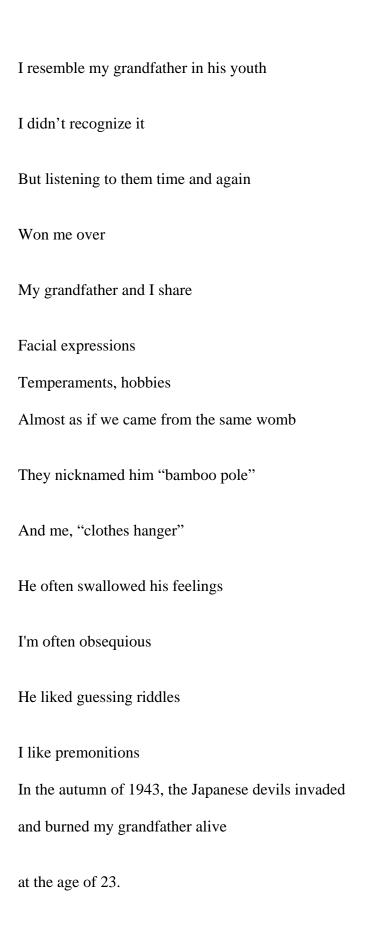
To grant me some belated solace

For this I had to grind away my corners, grind away my words

Refuse to skip work, refuse sick leave, refuse leave for private reasons

Refuse to be late, refuse to leave early





This year i turn 23	3
18 June 2013	

"The Last Graveyard"

Even the machine is nodding off

Sealed workshops store diseased iron

Wages concealed behind curtains

Like the love that young workers bury at the bottom of their hearts

With no time for expression, emotion crumbles into dust

They have stomachs forged of iron

Full of thick acid, sulfuric and nitric

Industry captures their tears before they have the chance to fall

Time flows by, their heads lost in fog

Output weighs down their age, pain works overtime day and night

In their lives, dizziness before their time is latent

The jig forces the skin to peel

And while it's at it, plates on a layer of aluminum alloy

Some still endure, while others are taken by illness
I am dozing between them, guarding
The last graveyard of our youth.
21 December 2011
"My Life's Journey is Still Far from Complete"
This is something no one expected
My life's journey
Is far from over
But now it's stalled at the halfway mark
It's not as if similar difficulties
Didn't exist before
But they didn't come
As suddenly
As ferociously
Repeatedly struggle
But all is futile

I want to stand up more than anyone else
But my legs won't cooperate
My stomach won't cooperate
All the bones of my body won't cooperate
I can only lie flat
In this darkness, sending out
A silent distress signal, again and again
Only to hear, again and again
The echo of desperation.
13 July 2014
"I Swallowed a Moon Made of Iron"
I swallowed a moon made of iron
They refer to it as a nail

I swallowed this industrial sewage, these unemployment documents

Youth stooped at machines die before their time

I swallowed the hustle and the destitution

Swallowed pedestrian bridges, life covered in rust I can't swallow any more All that I've swallowed is now gushing out of my throat Unfurling on the land of my ancestors Into a disgraceful poem. -- 19 December 2013 "Rented Room" A space of ten square meters Cramped and damp, no sunlight all year Here I eat, sleep, shit, and think Cough, get headaches, grow old, get sick but still fail to die Under the dull yellow light again I stare blankly, chuckling like an idiot I pace back and forth, singing softly, reading, writing poems Every time I open the window or the wicker gate I seem like a dead man

Slowly pushing open the lid of a coffin.

"Upon Hearing the News of Xu Lizhi's Suicide"

by Zhou Qizao, a fellow worker at Foxconn

The loss of every life

Is the passing of another me

Another screw comes loose

Another migrant worker brother jumps

You die in place of me

And I keep writing in place of you

While I do so, screwing the screws tighter

Today is our nation's sixty-fifth birthday

We wish the country joyous celebrations

A twenty-four-year-old you stands in the grey picture frame, smiling ever so slightly

Autumn winds and autumn rain

A white-haired father, holding the black urn with your ashes, stumbles home.

-- 1 October 2014