



Sky-Birthing Casket

By Sky Lin

You might expect me to write here:

"Dedicated to xxx..."

Truth is, I didn't plan to dedicate it to anyone specific.

But if you feel it should be dedicated to someone,

then consider it given to you—

the reader who paid 8.98 HKD to read it.

Thanks for being willing to read my little thoughts.

With gratitude

Enjoy.

Foreword: User Guide Before Opening the Box

On December 21, 2024, I opened a Substack account. In my first post, I wrote these words:

"This account's ID is 'sky's Box.' It comes from a sudden idea I recalled while chatting with a classmate recently—one I'd had a long, long time ago.

It always felt like a person's life can never break free from the confines of a 'box': the incubator the nurse places you in at birth, your school desk, your workstation after joining the workforce, the hospital bed in old age, and finally,

the urn or coffin your body rests in after death. All can be seen as a kind of 'box'—inescapable barriers.

But I want my own box to be open, or at least transparent, giving me the freedom to open up, come and go, even if only to see the outside world and others... and to let them see me too."

Starting around January 2025, I gradually wrote and published some poems on Substack, mainly sharing them with people close to me. Back then, writing poetry might have been a whim, a burst of inspiration. At school, we studied many poems by Yu

Guangzhong, and in January, I finished reading Hai Zi's collected poems.

After that, things snowballed, and I began deliberately crafting words in my mind. Over these months, quite a lot happened, and I ended up writing 46 poems in total. Some flowed from personal inspiration; others were imitations of renowned poets.

Admittedly, the quality is uneven. So for this book, I've only included the 30 that are readable.

As for why I named it Sky-Birthing Casket,

I'll just

say one of the poem titles holds the

answer—

flip a few pages and you'll see.

In any case, I sincerely thank you for reading this book, and for choosing to open this box to see inside.

Hope you find some joy within.

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Chapter 1

Setting Forth

Against the Flow

High noon—
The sun that dies and revives,
again, again,
Pushes the ceaseless air to
wind,
Which stirs the shade behind
the shade.
They stop and stand still—
Until motion persists without

end,
And counterflow becomes the
friend.

Dusk falls—

Let the sunset grow
From glistening dew on
summer's lotus, aglow.

Westward lies the waiting land;
Turn back east—spring's
branching path at hand.

2025.2.20

Dawn

Perhaps it is another stretch of
wild,

Where morning glimmers
dissolved,

And clouds liquefied into the
great river's rhythmic flow—

Rise, fall, curl, glow.

Beneath a sky that shifts its
hue,

Sinks sediment, a riverbed's

dark view.

The river breathes, untamed
and free,

A boundless course toward the
sea.

Merging with lake, stream,
ocean's line,

Into the water's ancient
design...

I pluck the first light of the
dawning,

An offering to the golden
morning—

Fish-scale bright in the break of
day.

2025.2.5

Chapter 2

Deadly Waves

Four Blossoms

Are Four blooms—

Four blooms clasped in a hand

so tight,

Plum, peony, bauhinia, lotus

white,

Flourishing on a shattered

leaf—

Maple's silhouette, beyond

belief.

Drawn near yet apart, they
grow,
Grafted by nature where ancient
roots flow;
One mother-tree, one land's
deep heart,
Though seasons try to tear them
apart.
Peony springs from Yellow
Earth's embrace,
Southward flies, scattering

petals through time and space.

Half-open, half-fallen—no
doubt remains;

Its fragrance stains the wind, its
resolve sustains.

Lotus and bauhinia, sisters
twin,

Bloom young in marshes where
tides sink in.

Hues spill from their cores,
scents interlace—

Muddy waters can't their
brilliance erase.

Plum, winter's envoy, flies from
islands afar,

Imprints spring with frost's
resilient scar.

Chimes from riverside towers
ascend,

Drums, clear waves—where
time and echoes blend.

On one leaf, one tree—they

gleam, they shine,
Rival queens or solitary divine.
Petals tangle, branches twine
and hold,
Hands lifting each stem, brave
and bold.
Greedy child—may I join the
watchful throng?
Guard these blooms where all
souls belong?
I've missed comets that brushed

us by,

Birds that soared through an
unpausing sky,

Beasts that roamed, rivers that
roar...

O ancient tree! I implore,
implore:

Hold back the sun from
setting's door.

I know—I know—

My hands should raise no

farewell cup for my own sake,
But measure tranquil hours,
dawns awake;
Count forty thousand nights,
then twenty, then ten—
Till time itself forgets its end.
Only let four blossoms never
fade away,
Never see decay.

2025.3.8

2025.4.16 last edited

Tomb Guardian

I light and relight
A flame both frigid and bright—
Cold fire in hues of blue,
To warm the damp watch over
you.

Crowds throng and pass,
Forever beneath the grass.
I, the lone breathing thing,
guard

Their afterlife's fragile

reward—

That hazy "golden road" they
hoard...

O you who lived for futures
unseen,

Even in death, chasing what
might have been—

May your reborn self pause its
stride.

Time gives me its ceaseless
flow;

I can only return this shattered
witness

To the dark below.

2025.1.15

Butterfly

Nature's own child,
One in a million's million
fold—

Clad in vivid skirts of wing,
Now a splendid corpse on the
asphalt, cold.

Shattered on the road,
Pulped by waves of feet,
untold—

Patterns blurred to stains,

Frame dismantled, stripped of
grace,
A clump of mud that melts into
earth's forgetting,

2025.1.16

Mildewed

Front part forgot—
Left my brain in the corner to
rot.

Knocked a hole through the
wall

For sun and wind to stall
The molding...

Now mildewed—
Back part? Forgetting.

2025.1.20

Kuafu and Jingwei

Sun-chasing Kuafu—
Clutching his blood-slick
bronze staff,
A small book stained red—
He runs.

Sunlight, a barbed thorn
through clouds,
Pierces its worshipper,
Pins him beneath the waves—
Drowns every pulse of chase

and praise.

A fierce whisper: “Water kills
you.”

He dreams—

Dreams himself a sea-bird now,

Flinging twig-arrows

At the ocean’s water-throne.

Slave to the sun, and serf to the
sea...

Waves crash—

Nothing changed.

2025.1.20

Banner

Watch them raise a flag—

Up,

Up,

Again and again.

Jiangnan's wind brings a hazy
veil;

Same spring breeze, same
eastern gale

That tries to blow winter's chill
pale.

Night builds walls that jail the
sun,

Melt words till meaning's

undone,
Cast silent idols, stiff as stone.
The banner hangs high,
Farther from the soil and sky...
Then in the dark,
Night wind tears the flag apart.
I shut my eyes—
Red darker than night's own
face.

2025.1.6

Tao

Too nimble, perhaps—

That's why the cuckoo steals
the nest,

The fox wears a tiger's crest.

Spread wings toward the sky:

The giant roc? Just a sparrow in
disguise.

Drain sweat and blood dry,

Plunge into seas—become the
whale that roams.

Abandon the fight for flight,
Too empty, might that be—
At one with all you see?
Yet chased by rites of shame,
Bludgeoned by rules that
tame...
Watch crowds kneel on steps
below,
Unknowable.
Only stars like chessmen
strewn—

Then turn, roam the boundless
alone.

Withdraw from the world—
O freedom! unfurled.

2025.2.5

For the Black-and-White Faded Flag

With eyes I shaped from black
and white,
I stare at the bleached flag—
Illegal in my homeland's sight.
On an island forgotten, wiped
off the map,
Waves gave her an hourglass
wrap;
Exile stitched a thorn-stitched
shroud for her sap.
The world only knows to retell
Old tales—sweet or bitter?

Who can tell?
Just dresses, rinses, drags the
knell...

“How long must I remember?
Only plum blooms, willows’
December.”

I spread my hands—let the flag
drift free.

Northwest winds from the
mainland blow fierce and wild,
Scouring red and blue to dust,
unreconciled—

Turning azure skies beneath
blood-red to black,

Paints struggle as joy with ink
of the void,

2025.2.4

Postscript: Humans are like
this—once the scar heals, the
wound's forgotten.

Rebirth

Zhuangzi holds a silver coin—
Where it falls, Kun-Peng
unfolds,
Fleeing hell named "Life" we're
sold.

But two sides alone
Can sprout life's vivid green?
Staring at odds no mind can
grasp,
Does the coin even exist?

Cowards fear only the unseen;
On the road to hell's permanent
stay,

They edge closer day by day.

Tossing the coin again,
Beating calculators in vain—
Trying to prove the unjust,
Choking rebirth's breath to
dust.

O you guilty of greed's ploy,
Wishing this world were but a
harbor

Where dead souls could
anchor...

Earth, a shoal for waiting
rebirth.

Sweet voyage—with the living,
sail forth.

Goodnight,
Good morn.

2025.2.17

Industrial Product

Drills and wails from five to
ten,

Factory bells forbid his lifted
gaze.

In his diary, he praises the
siren's song,

Surrendered to foremen—
Twelve years' grind to prime
this fresh product made.

Hollow, chilled, and desiccate,

Facing flight yet caged by
plains outside the gate.

On the factory roof—a swirl of
dust, round and round.

Wishes to be labor, not the
output found...

In work clothes, he rolls off the
line,

Arms trembling,

Mad mad mad—

Grabs the sky,

Clasps the ground.

2025.4.23

Paper Plane

Clutching a paper plane—could
it reach heaven?

In night's sullen stillness,
It bursts through flesh-dams,
you and me.

Fingers dig deep into its folded
seams—

Spikes and silk from my softest
dreams...

Tossed far in an envelope,

Begging monsoons to carry its
scope—

Words that bleed, script that
won't end,

A journey bearing symbols, ton
by ton.

Who cares if mud stains the
road, my knees,

Or unsung divine decrees?

Dreamt: the iron-pig train on
East Rail Line

Linking tender Ximending to

Mong Kok's rust and shine.
But reality runs nowhere—can't
connect

Kowloon-Canton's dead tracks,
decade or century wrecked.

Perhaps paper planes fail too—
We're no great inventors, it's
true.

Parallel monsoons? Trapped in
wide gorges, squeezed through.
Fingers cling tighter, numb and
cold—

Thanks to global warming, I'm
told.

AC at eighteen degrees; black
hearts frosted white.

You and I, wretched, ugly,
adrift in night—

Boarding what? Front, back, or
a walled-up void?

Wind slashes cold, destroyed.

2025.4.13

River of Drifting Sands

Grain by grain by grain—from
Gobi's keep,
They turn, rise, float on Siberian
winds that leap,
Stirring from a thousand-year
sleep.
Southward flow gives them
hotter breath,
Or wearied sighs on currents
close to death.

The great river's waves:
Surge, sink, pile in slaves;
Scour, spill, trend in caves—
Scraping lungs, corroding their
glass-child graves.
And so—and so—
Gelded mines, rusted, still throb
and groan.
In deindustrializing North
China,
Half-dreamers bolt the dams
tighter...

But last—last—it's wind, not
rivers, scraping the sky.

2025.4.13

In Dreams

Three minutes' sleep—
Half-minute drowse, half-
dangling legs.

A fall...

How many lives lived in
dreams?

Stillborn again, again in thick
amniotic steam.

No guilt for deaths across
lifetimes, it seems.

Waking raw as a child—
I lift quilts like coffin lids
reborn, defiled.
Déjà vu stirs faint-begged
drifting deaths;
What's tossed aside? Youth
aged before its breath.

2025.4.14

Chapter 3

Late Spring

Hymn of Praise

I am Kuafu's martyr chasing
sun—

Lover of you, and all that
nature's done.

Down to the mortal world we
came,

My flesh the chisel, yours the
flame:

On a stele named "Drifting
Smoke" I grave

A hymn for you and sun—this

praise I save.

May my gaze, with sunrays,
race

Through time and space—
My embrace arrives before my
frame

In this ashen world where we
once came,

Passing by, only a fleeting
stay...

2025.2.10

Letters

Let me write you letters for a
year—

May the me from seasons past
appear

In streams of love that never
end,

Repaving paths that calendars
rend.

In winter's envelope, tuck
summer's lotus leaf;

In spring's embrace, hold
autumn's blood-red grief.
Forge two rings from two
seasons' turn—

Wear them on our linear vow,
as time-lines burn.

2025.2.10

Wake

I clench a comet in my palm—
Its trail: not just petals and dust.
Let me drift as plankton in
dead-star seas,
Or be your paper boat through
human tides, released.
Dream you paint whitecaps on
my frame,
Swelling distance at each
seam—

Piercing folds and moonlight's
gleam,

To fill the harbor between my
hips, unseen.

Your lingering heat ripples
scalding—

Docks the paper boat where
crowds are parting.

A sprout becomes the anchor's
core;

Seeds fall with stars
forevermore.

2025.2.11

Spring Rain

You wipe mist and gleam off
the mirror—

Baptizing all beings, and my
unclean soul.

Water's sound—our shared
melody;

With sprouts you gave, I shape
my limbs to be,

Twining your arms and tides as
I suck and cling.

You tuck the first rain in your
pocket—

Spring's early gift, a timeless
locket.

I confess my stains, my
wandering heart—

But I love spring, you more
than every part.

2025.2.12

To Earth, To Sky

The banyan stretches south,
Clutching the sky's ground with
its mouth.

Roots, trunk, wait—
Old beards grow young again
as twigs or anchor's weight.
Home is elsewhere;

Even oceans away,
They say: "Ten years to
cultivate a tree,

A hundred to raise humanity."
So let rains that love you (and
you love) fall—

Mostly clear skies, sun-
showers: not much at all.

No sun? You suffice.

Slender air-roots merely wish
To pierce the soil's veil while
gazing up at blue—

For earth's sky is the view
ahead of you.

2025.2.24

Spring Across Seven Hundred Miles

To my distant love—
This lovesick fool
Drives an old, rumbling truck
Hauling a cargo of spring
through winter's stuck.
Punctured tires whisper asphalt
smoke;
Forests blush pink and emerald,
woke.

South of the Tropic's line, it
flies—

Crossing seven hundred miles
of strait,

Scattering sakura petals late.

Pray I clutch you before spring
escapes,

Though heartbeats sync across
the scapes.

When midsummer swells high,

Lotus blooms will pierce the
sky—

Across our chests, the long road
lies.

2025.3.7

Lover's Eyes

My love, do you know

Your eyes can speak?

The gaze you cast at me—

A thrill of love, electric, weak.

You show me deepest, deepest

down—

The weariness and smoothness

your heart calls home.

How I long to stroke your lids

in our scent's sea...

Meet my eyes—

Look at me.

2025.4.11

Island of Tears

One tear falls—

Two.

I weep for the island.

I weep for her timidity, her
solitude.

She calls me close—

So I listen.

Step, step, step—

Not across vast fertile plains,
Nor highways others paved.

I'll climb her peaks, trace every
inch she gave.

Hard, harder, hardest—

I walk, tread, witness—

Wearing out pair after pair after
pair of shoes, straw or cloth.

I'll cross rivers and straits—

No boat? A raft.

Raft rots? I'll swim,

Ripping through arrogant waves
with this soft frame.

Drifting with the current—

Second, second, second...

My tears—

One a drop, two a stream, three
an ocean unfurled,
Anchoring continents with the
waves' own swirl.

Island, island—tell me:
Would you scrape off your hills,
remake your clay,
Let us sink still on a quilt of
sea?

No waking, no sorrow in

dreams' display.

Parting is whole, parting must
be—

Know this: the sun we love
began

Not in atomic collision, but
cleavage's tragedy.

Island, island—if you're an ark,
I'll plead—let me be a barnacle
plucked by currents dark.

Island, island—if a
candleholder,

Don't—I beg—bury me (wild,
dark-hidden) in yellowed fire.

Island, island—had I sprung
from your shore,

I'd make the sun rise
westwards,

Time forward forward forward
race—

Back before Wegener's
grandsire's ashes found their
place.

To see the day you drifted from

the land—

No fission, no rift—

Just flowers (no—fireworks)
bursting to bloom in the sea's
command.

Blinded by tears I offer you—
Dear island, what meaning have
I for you?

But you bid me cry—

So I listen.

Blink, bow—

One tear falls—

Two.

I weep for the island.

2025.4.19

To Night

Night is a dagger—
Murdered the sun that jailed the
stars;
Stripped the moon's gleam
from her scars.

2025.1.8

Chapter 4

Sky Birth

Sky-Birthing Casket

Midnight waves lift the small
casket high,

Tossed to touch a gray wild
land—

Then plunged in trench-rivers
where deep waters run,
Dissolving through sea and
sand.

Year by year, a messenger from
isles afar,

Riding winter's monsoon, icy
and keen;
Returning with pollen, spring's
scent in a jar,
And skies of clear blue, freshly
seen—
Spilled from the casket, azure
unfurls,
Fills the sea's flawless gray
with luminous swirls.
At the crest of the crest, it
beholds:

Waves churning for miles,
relentless and bold;
Gales raging beyond a hundred
dawns, untold.

From the bottomless casket,
more than yesterday's skies
Swell forth—twigs, tender
leaves, rebirth's tangled sighs...
So down the eternal currents it
glides,
Up built tides it rides.

By nameless road signs on the
river's side,
Half-dead campfires left behind,
It discovers—above cloud
seas—a great fish with fins
outspread,
A prairie on its fins where
windmills and village thread.
No island is an island, it comes
to know:
Even ocean floors link the
world below.

Hearing sky and sea (never
embracing) say:

“Drift on—

All mountains and waters
behind lift you away.”

When farewell loops back
anew,

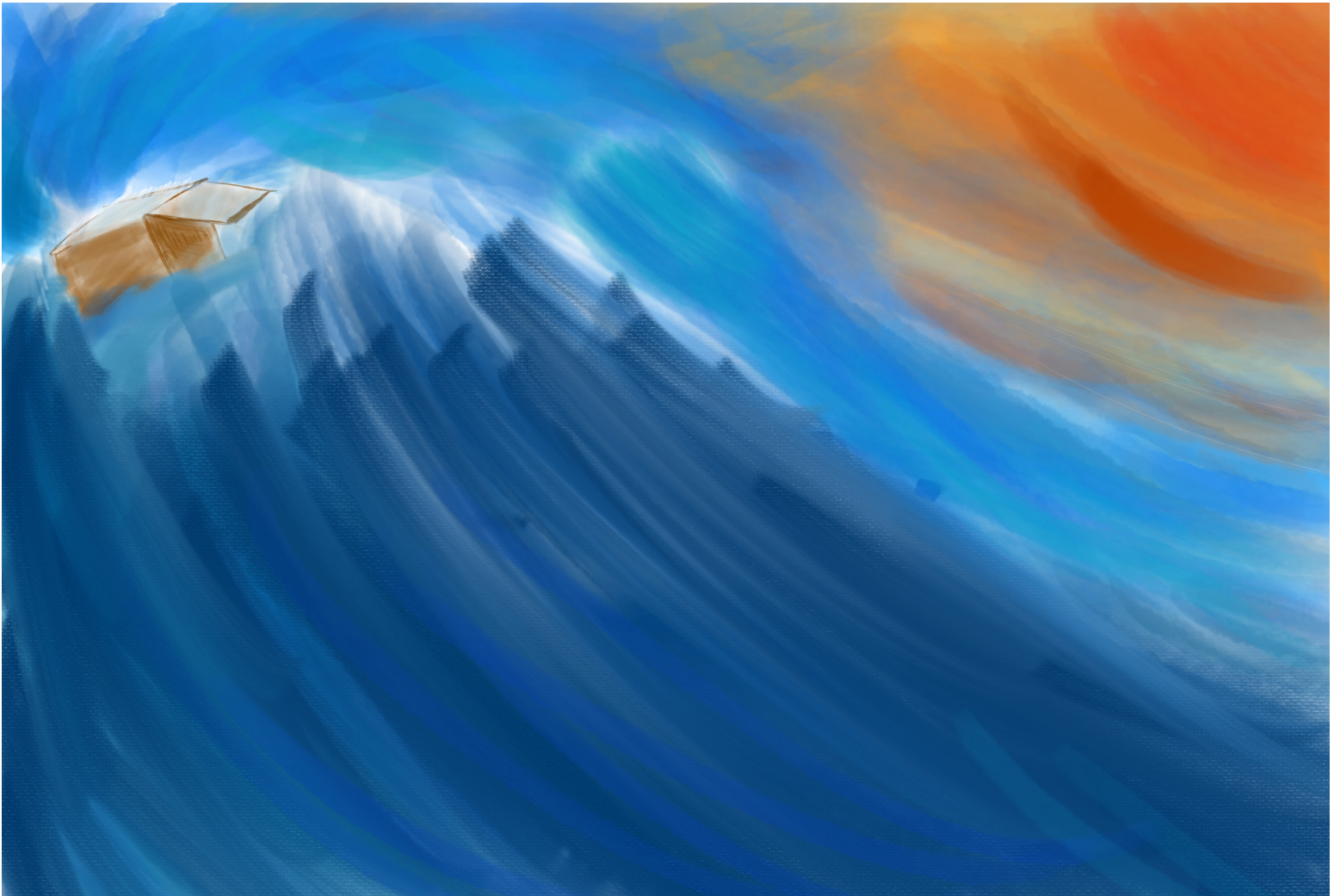
It tells itself: “Floating with
untamed cloud-rivers that
break,

Half-strands of dawn or noon-
bright gift,

I offer the clear day that futures
shall take.”

2025.5.25

2025.6.10 last edited



Inspiration of this poem

*Perhaps it was a sudden idea that surfaced in my mind—
an attempt to capture a single spark of inspiration through
both visual and textual lenses, to see what might emerge.
I didn't want my creation to be confined or bound by words
alone.*

*Maybe it was also an act of quiet desperation, after too long
without inspiration—a leap taken on chance.
And so came this painting; then came this poem; and finally,
from this convergence, this book was born.*

River of Drifting Sands

Grain by grain from Gobi's
keep—

They turn, rise on Siberian
winds that leap,
Stirring from a thousand-year
sleep.

Southward flow lends scorching
breath,

Or floating gasps near dusty
death.

The great river's waves:
Surge, sink, pile in graves;
Scour, spill, trend through
caves—

Scraping lungs, etching their
glass-child's knaves.

And so—and so—
Gelded mines, rust-scabbed,
still throb below.

North China deindustries;
Half-dreamers bolt the dams,
futile pleas...

But last—last—wind scrapes,
not rivers, the skies.

2025.4.13

For White Jade

The full moon's sixteenth tear
descends,
Through sky it falls, its journey
ends.

Jade Rabbit's mortar-grinds to
grit,
Colorless shores where city
lights admit.

Sea lunges at her, lurches at
moon—

Drags them in a savage tune.
While tears clutch mangrove
 roots below,
Mingling in tides' eternal
 flow—
Warm in the ocean's silent
 glow.
Let Chang'e come, witness,
 reclaim
What fell from her domain.

2025.2.17

Listening to the Sea

Sea-breeze brushes my face
awake—

Carries spring's whisper thirty
miles along the lake.

Wet night drips moonlight's
staggered pace,

While kites skim tides' blurred
embrace.

Hush—it half-blows the wind-
chime by my bed,

Ink-wash veils where black and
white clouds wed.

I watch May's soft heat and
April's aborted days—

Thirty-eight moons spill wax
and wanes.

Toward endless dawns it flies:
full moons' ceaseless leaks—
Crimson skies devour their
floods in streaks.

2025.5.13

Sprinkler Truck

For now, the sprinkler truck's
the rainbow-maker in our
streets—

Standing in its mist, I'm a man
inside the rainbow's fleets.
Washing off the solitude crowds
pressed on me,
Noon's drowsy light refracts—
drops tear at my eyes,
Crystallizing a tide of spectrum,

wise.

Its prisms turn to
kaleidoscope—

City's dreams in water-hope.

2025.5.18

I Want to Be a Burning Snow Mountain for You

I want to be a burning snow
mountain for you,
Just like the mountain these my
turbid eyes now view.
Melting, evaporating,
sublimating – shedding the
snow's shell,
Please do not hinder this
seeming futility as well.

Who says the solid ice and
boulders of deep winter cannot
ignite?

Perhaps no flame appears in
sight,

But whether it's me or the
glacier, great waves surge on
with might,

Like endless, trailing threads of
thought in flight,

Washing, nourishing peak,
slope, and base, then rushing

back mid-height.

Sprinkled with the waves is
dandelion down,

Tossed by west and east winds,
blown

Onto the cliffside's moist earth
by the verdant breeze, to wait
For dusk-white clouds' rebirth,
another dawn's awakening state.

The flame, washed back from
pale blue to white,

Yet warming still, holds an

emerald-green heart bright,
Constantly, constantly,
constantly baking it with heat,
And me, its like, watching the
carefree clamor drift downwind
so fleet.

Turbid are not just my eyes, but
this fire's core,

Faint yellow, faint purple glows
fill the hilltops once more.

Warming stones, once firm and
cold,

See cracks between their
fingertips unfold, stretch, and
take hold.

The east wind blows; the snow
mountain burns higher, bolder,
Brighter still, the earthly pipes'
pure clarity Zhuangzi told her.
The unburning ice of years or
millennia ago carries me to
dreamland deep.

At dawn, into my bed I creep,
Dreaming:

I want to be a burning snow
mountain for you,
Just like this spring my clear
eyes now see anew.

2025.4.21

Youth

I pray to be sunlight that parts
the mist for your spring—
Like the dawn I've seen, lush
and enduring,
Rising as ever, burning plains
afar,
Climbing just like you,
Star by star.
Flew over sixty-six years'
flight—

Swept North China, Pearl
River's light.

On young earth, young you,
young me—unfurled,
Walk toward hearts that shift
the world,
To the hearth where embers
never cool.

2025.5.4

End

Thanks For Reading

What comes next for the little box
is already taking shape.

