

FRED WAH / Richmond

Page after page of boundary turning
Sandblasted crane of the blue heron highway
Free subliminal neighborhoods wired home
Without the rest of the world Khenko's serenity is heavy weather

Does this cul de sac remind you of your old hutong
Street after street with no return
No cranes, but
Could that blue heron be your ride to heaven

They have not deimperialized themselves to history
How you say Aberdeen is how you say Sitkum dollah
Our stepping stones of duplication, just 'cuz we're hungry
Call to work out a way to live, just call out the "wretched"

How would you say Aberdeen in Chinook
Flip your loonie for a sitkum dolla
Translate the signs High Muck-a-muck

A saffron robe somewhere is easily understood but far away
We imagine things are not so fixed and integrated into waterfalls
Public art is always so much someone else's multicultural intention
That is fantasy ocean we all children live at the edge of

The dragon here's domestic art
Like Pender Street protected by the fires of intention
Another middle kingdom sculpted from cement
We're all still hungry and we want to get home

New West's two nests of pests
The nest of memory and
Apologies for the rest

Vast concrete plinths, yes let's make it out of concrete
Remember granite overlapping the archipelago of immigration
Retrace the water snake as purple on the spirit duplicator
Another menu of surprise you're even here, lucky

through the same mouthless anger arriving there,
here and back again stopped stunned and caught
in this double-bind of other information, Chinese-Canadian,
China Chinese tongue-tied vacant humming smoulder deep
that anger at not having language itself, never mind the
words — that much anger, at the empty, emptied, voice
except behind your eyes the absence clouded shuttled ocean
washed up along your brow just another line of chippy foam.
Wave. Whoosh.

The star of Chinese Checkers, how can you forget Taiwan
The diaspora jumps and scatters all its citizens
The counterbalance to a Mainland not so main at home
Just multicoloured dragon eggs mass-produced displacement of the heart

The signs are clear, come in and get placed anyplace
And get lost, Forbidden City's another ideogram of history
Read it please don't try to understand it as a form of structural domination
A city's language is just a measure of a neighborhood's domestic scale

The sign is clear
This is the River Road to Forbidden City
Each road numbered as a radical for history
Read it where you are
Still on your way
To something new.