

The Meditations on the Reflection of Seasons – The Traveller

by [Justin Wong](#) (June 2023)



Dolbadern Castle, J.M.W. Turner RA, 1800

In a distant portion of the World,
Past the point where east transforms to west,
The spirit of Romance is invented,
Things flourish as they decay back home,
I saw things I pray couldn't dream,
A world of contrasts as falling snow of winter,
To the wind-scattered blossoms of spring.
Empires of the earth are said to rise and fall,
The thing that once freely roamed the plain,
Falleth to the earth in a deluge of dust.

I thus could see England's place in history,
What might be said to be a recreation of Rome,
The fifth century in the twenty-first,
When barbarous made ruins of mighty creature,
Seen through the vastness of conquered continent,
When such things as sweetness and light
Civilised a place of fallen primitives,
In laying roads that severed counties and Kingdoms.

The archaic middle Country—Zhong guo
Going back ancestral centuries, a place of prehistory,
Emerged out of the dust of the fallen tower,
A child becoming heir in its father's demise,
Or Cordelia coming to the crown after destruction,
In the peaceful calm that waits for the storm to pass.
As the unsuspecting spring after winter's finality.

There, bearing witness to a sanguine world,
One birthing a garden fair in April's natalism,
There is the expectations of things to come,
Like the heat of an eastern Aestive,
The kiln-like fire in July's fury,
A world yet to mature in August's realisation,
The fall in Autumn's beginning of the end,
Or the teleology of Winter's senility, Dongtian.

There is an innocence in youthfulness,

A vitality to be found in May,
Such that is lost on the faces lost of the old,
Living their last days in geriatric residences,
The final stop on the pilgrimage preceding purgatory,
It is easy to see fascination of a youth's countenance,
To be seduced by those fresh to things,
Unfazed by experience, unaware of reality,
The sin conceived innocence of spring.

But there is a rebirth found on foreign shores,
As if the pacific were the womb of the east,
In cities, skyscrapers reach the heavens,
Lost in the vapourous flotation of fume formed clouds,
That mosaic of streets might go on past eternity,
There are malls, labyrinths of multistoried commerce,
Restaurants filled with the novelty of desirous delicacies,
Removed from the convention of known things.

All travel moves the voyager to a corresponding moment in
history,
Backwards or Forwards in an eternal, cyclical movement,
Space and time conjoined in a Country,
In its cities, its capitals, its provinces divided as Israel's
sons,
When severed each a portion of a contractual realm,
Time ventures slowly to those in their springtide,
A joy is glanced on faces in the morning sickness
Of an expecting world, bringing forth new life.

Strangely it is here that I understand England,
In alien climes multitudinous miles apart,
The contrast in countries, in foreign unwitnessed ways,
Things that seemed as normal as the inhalation of air
Are inherited peculiarities of a specific place,
The travel to civilisations, the sound of a tongue,
The particularity of customs, gives one a vision of a veiled
knowledge,
Lost in the parochial confinement of one's place of birth.

Therein lies a worldly baptism,
The backwards motion of time,
The rebirth of spring within the summer,
A second grasp at formative growth,
For aren't all children foreigners?
Here's a chance to see the lost images of youth
With a consciousness endowed by knowing,
One now becomes rapt in meditation of things
That slipped the fingers of a fickle memory.

The second stab at life exists in spectacles,
The ways at work in an undreamt city,
As if the Venetian sauntering the Silk Road,
Traipsing through the threshold of Cathay on camel,
A parodist Messiah, from west to the east,
Seeing things in strangely adorned Mandarins,
The commerce of spices, jewels, exotic fabrics and fancies.
Past bars and squalid brothels with their forbidden wares,
Arriving in Xanadu with the Jerusalem oil and a Papal edict,
To the stately Palace at the pleasure of the Emperor.

Here is my own book of fragmented Marvels,
Fickle memories of the formidable Kingdom,
Of things first witnessed to be in time forgotten,
As nights to a blaze of Baijiu and Beer.
In the humidity of a Sauna thick summer night.
Sweat seemed as if it would drip forever from my pores,
Through imperceptible night and all-seeing day alike,
Then was the shift in reality. The sense of somewhere else.

Beyond the never-ending onslaught of cars of the city,
Adding pollution to the coal burning powerhouses,
Beyond the cyclists and electric motorists,
Beyond towering abodes housing people in their hundreds,
Exists aspects that sever civilisations,
Stepping into these streets is not home,
Seen in the harmony of a people working as one,
Like the windborne servility of a colony of oblivious bees.

Confucius was born but a short trek away,
The train took me there one afternoon, Qufu,
His scandalous school talks of a coming together,
A vision of a world where each have their place,
Away from the strife and discord of corruption,
The war of all against all of the present-day polis,
Where severed is the timeless link bridging Father and Son,
As is the sacred paradisaical bond of man and wife
In the desecration of ethereal ordinances.

There is a love to be seen on the faces of maidens,
The nymphs emerging from haze-filled roads like a Grecian
stream,
Exotic eyes of the inextricable other,
As if the heaven of an opium eaters rest.
Experiencing wholeness through a complimentary form,
As it thus had been archetypally envisaged,
That is born of the prophecy of primary impression,
When two cross at a fated and predestined moment,
Concluding in mourning in opposition to the idealist.

A welcome contrast to the hucksterism of love,
A culture dead to the imagination's imperceptible realms,
The medieval roots—the concept of the Troubadour,
In the Freudian transference of monastic devotion,
Wandering across a makeshift divinity on pilgrimage,
The muse of memory talks of a worship,
The lover being the object of the subject,
A spirit unseen that is universal.

A banality that is expected in life's various phases,
That evaded my experience
In the boredom of my undesired days,
Love—a thing talked oft about though rarely seen,
I managed to find in divers places
An expanse apart from Albion,
As if I were the prince sent to redeem in fairy tale,
Or she a princess saved from some soft sleep of illusion.

There was wonder felt in the presence of my vanished lovers,
The prized and priceless jewels of her eyes,
That imprinted in my mind as the recollection of carnage,
I'll hearken back to her graven image upon death,
In moments preceding metempsychosis,
The place past Heaven's gate will share a likeness
To a soul I witnessed through the city's tainted air,
Sensations gained from experience will flow
Back in the light of an unknown realm.

There is an irony of love to the sojourner,
The contradiction of Cassandra's curse,
In time severed from that which ignites my desire,
Through the bureaucracy of circumstance,
My mistresses are nothing if not paradoxical,
Shipped here, we are uncemented with a ceremony,
Unconsummated in the black of nightfall's hush.

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Justin Wong is originally from Wembley, though at the moment is based in the West Midlands. He has been passionate about the English language and literature since a young age. Previously, he lived in China working as an English teacher. His novel, *Millie's Dream*, is available [here](#).

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