

ARTICLE DU DR. MING-LI paru dans la presse chinoise aux USA :

Books at Night

**'Jour Plus Clair Que Le Jour'** by Athanase Vantchev de Thracy

Dr Lin Ming-Li

Athanase Vantchev de Thracy is President of the World Poets Organization 'Poetas del Mundo' and a Universal Peace Ambassador for Geneva. He enjoys considerable international popularity as a poet and translator and has published over fifty books. In late summer, I was pleased and surprised to receive from France his newly published collection of poems 'Jour Plus Clair Que Le Jour". I found the work extraordinary. If the soul is what gives poetry its voice and artful images are what engage the reader, then in Athanase's poetry we find their organic meeting point. The title of the collection is not only richly poetic but it retains a youthful perspective while at the same time demonstrating a subtle use of language and an extraordinary aesthetic perception. The book has been stylishly translated into Chinese by the famous American poet William Marr.

As we see in the poem 'Memoriam Rei Redintegrare', the poet's inner feelings extend out into the external world in a sensitive, free style:

Memory, you alone never forget

the faces of men and things,

the world of flesh become pure abstraction.

I was life, I became word,

I was eternity, I became time.

Memory, always new

in the succeeding days.

*Translated by Norton Hodges*

The rhythm of the poem not only relies on symmetrical phrases but also on the harmony between them. Here we can feel a kind of emotional dynamics, both from the poem's extraordinary ability to concentrate memories of people and things, but also in the way the poem reflects the evolution of the poet's style.

In a further poem, 'Better To Hear', beauty is expressed in highly visual language:

You open all the windows

better to hear

the music of the fields,

better to see

the divine spectacle

of the poplars leaning

over the wonder-struck waters

of the pond.

The trembling of every leaf

is an angelic note,

a voluptuous piece of heaven.

*Translated by Norton Hodges*

The poet's ideas and vision not only demonstrate the reward of openness to life, but also reveal the poet's own insight. As far as artistic expression is concerned, this is a distinctive, multi-layered combination of images; the poet's song is close to nature, to the magic depths of the world. Awe, joy and thought are juxtaposed in an extremely musical setting.

Another striking poem is 'Eternal Treasure', with its particularly French colourings, pure and beautiful:

That tender voice singing outside,

could it be the spring light

or the voice of someone once loved

who is now no more than a path bordered by agapanthus

in the seaside garden of my heart?

Amazed, dreaming,

I lean my head against the whiteness

of time that keeps me company,

I, who try to practise in silence

the art of immortality

on the terrace of cinnabar where memories live!

O poetry,

eternal treasure,

you my wealth forever.

my imperishable riches!

Eternal treasure,

Eternal treasure!

*Translated by Norton Hodges*

This is a poem that leaves a strong impression with its visual symbols, its tone, colour, atmosphere and varying mood.

The poem 'The Robin' also typically reflects the poet's aesthetic pursuit:

*'Speaks of an extraordinary simplicity...'*

Ralph Dutli

The sparkling blue of the snow

under the smoky tulle of the sky

and you, my little bird,

my providential companion

in orphaned solitude,

you who chisel out

the intimately granular facets of the air

with your voice of blue diamond

so as to speak

the entire brightness of creation.

The blood of your tiny throat

is like a timeless rose



on the imponderable whiteness of the garden.

You, whose song

inspires an invincible hope

in the sleeping stems

which lie beneath winter's

soft harshness.

You, with your divine delicacy

in the midst of life's

sadnesses!

*Translated by Norton Hodges*

Here, the poet has gradually shifted from Symbolist poetry and become an Imagist, more focused on subjective ideas and feelings.

One of his masterpieces, 'Transparency', also reflects this changing imagery:

*For Ali Husteev*

The satin smooth shadow lifts rippling hyacinths

towards the stooping branches of the weeping willows –

slowly all becomes love

now that the heart is pure

and quiet.

*Translated by Norton Hodges*

Athanase has also written with warmth and sincerity about other famous poets, always with closely integrated images and a focus on love:

For example, in a poem dedicated to his friend Todd, 'We Used To Read':

**We used to read together the ecstatic poems  
of Dante and Petrarch\*, of Keats and Shakespeare,  
the exalted evening came like an immense sigh  
to place on our shoulders its utmost light.**

**\*Francesco Petrarca, anglicized as Petrarch (1304-1374), Italian poet and scholar, the 'Father of Humanism'.**

Here, the poet is completely immersed in the beautiful realm of literature. He expresses his deep love of poetry, of the joy of reading but with a darker undertone.

In the poem 'You Feed Your Heart With Poetry' we can appreciate the poet's sincere feelings and his clear artistic style:

Norton, my Friend,

you feed your heart with poetry,

each line of your verse

is a piece torn from life,

you, who love so much

the evangelical gentleness of the sea,

the hammered hymns of the skylarks

and the fearful grace of robins.

How dear to me

are your noble words!

O Poetry,

treasure of light

hidden in the breast

of beings of light!

I know, Norton,

God sees the world

through our enlightened

happy eyes!

*Translated by Norton Hodges*

On the evidence of this book, the poet is both a romantic and on the side of light. His work evidences a highly artistic personality as shown in his many gloriously individual poems. The author is a very learned man, with extensive knowledge of Classics. He has written numerous poems and articles about Greek and Latin poetry and has won many international poetry prizes. For over seventy years he has continued the admirable pursuit of poetic creation and translation. In my email correspondence with him, I have learned that he is about to come to Taiwan to participate in our poetic culture. As the most distinguished Greek poet and Nobel laureate Odysseas Elytis (1911 ~ 1996) has said: 'Innumerable secret signs, with which the universe is studded and which constitute so many syllables of an unknown language, urge us to compose words, and with words, phrases whose deciphering puts us at the threshold of the deepest truth.' Athanase's poetry exists precisely in order to pursue divine beauty in fluid verse in love with the world. He is also immersed in the history of the Eastern Orthodox Church and his poems have been translated into many languages, all in all reaching a high level of artistic beauty.

15.08.15 Taitung

Taitung (Taïwan) est la ville où habite la poétesse et critique littéraire Lin Ming-Li