

FROM MACAO: A MAP OF THE SEASONS

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Christopher Kelen

first ferry for Macao

float down from mid-levels,
day escalating...
fire's up when the harbour comes

a single junk slips the sea in its pocket
rocking forth and back
and in an order remembered
without even thinking
we do

Bemvindo

everything's slower here
there's waiting for the rain to lighten
bright and dark puzzle us to our places
tiles from the back room give you the rhythm
hammering somewhere
—that's for distance

the money machine in the wall
says
'relax, take your time
we do

not in Hong Kong now'

Gung Hey Fa Choi

just these few weeks
heaven turns up the air con

mortals make smoke day and night
world's our tinder

one outing per garment
this winter is precious

the sky comes tinsel

lai see, lai see
your students call
half mocking, half hoping

all the barbers still shut, all the pronto-a-vestirs

the day is a red pocket
every future is trapped
ten patacas worth

when the world re-opens
at a new beast's behest

the day has gown into a tree

neither leaves nor fruit
but the day bears red pockets

too awkward to heave into the skip
the tree will gutter

the pockets unfilled
themselves will be landfill

when heaven, so recently charred,
starts to drip

February

this is that season
when bones creak
brain's too damp to fire

there's no more carting round clouds
when you're in them

how much depth to the rain?

the town climbs through it
like a sea in stages

the sky in its speech
is shy
but unending

how much height to the rain?
there are no eyes up
no cupped hands to catch

between skies
out of doors
umbrellas come open

then heaven lets down with its rope

dark of office
 I hear this adjusting
like an old building
lost in thought
 of how to preserve
its nonchalance
 knowing the ivy
holds it up

the world sticks to me
too much this day

Macao: Apostrophe

Macao

I would like you to stop at the crossing for me
and without cursing
and not just for me
what-the-hell
for yourself

Macao

I would like you to smoke less
not to spit the bones out on the table
to clear your throat less noisily
what do you expect? I'm a gweilo

Macao

if your mobile goes off once more
in a concert
I'm going to crush it under my big cowboy boot
I know it will be noisy but think of my pleasure
and how we might then all hear the song

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