

## Adrienne Ho

### Green

There is a *long cold green*  
*evening of spring*

like a delicate worm  
nestled in your arm.

The smell of green  
spreading like a heat,

a moss, a stain  
of green tea and lips

flicking wet over dew  
on morning grass.

Green like buds and  
the burst of new leaves in sunlight,

the explosion in your eyes.  
It's your favourite colour

this green green, pure  
green as laughter.

Green lint on your bedsheets  
leaving cotton traces

and the aftertaste  
of green in the afternoons.

Root green veins in your hands  
branching out branching in

like the seed in your heart  
sprouting tendrils.

*(The italicized lines stem from Elisabeth Harvor's book, The Long Cold  
Green Evenings of Spring, Signal Editions/Véhicule Press, 1997)*

## Goldberg, Reprise

of space, connected to nothing, touching  
nothing. Gould's fingers on ivory keys.  
It isn't Bach he's playing  
from the grave, the stopped heart.  
-Lorna Crozier, *The Goldberg Variations*

It's that time  
of year you don't have time  
for me. When everything is beginning,  
budding green and new, something  
dulls the burnished glass between  
our clasped hearts, placing  
wide eyes on meticulous lines  
and splotched ink. I can't help  
but feel a decaying  
of space, connected to nothing, touching

my own limp fingers. What is there  
to hold now that your hands  
are occupied? My wrist bones  
are hollowed like a rest, a break  
over the barline, slow  
as a musical ease  
at the end of a phrase. Always  
ending, perhaps with a bow, a folding  
at the waist that seizes  
nothing. Gould's fingers on ivory keys

resemble your own intrinsic pose,  
hunched and swaying, making women swoon  
at the first note sounded.  
You wear gloves in July and soak  
your hands just like him;  
his pill-popping  
habit crouches around the corner  
of your life and there's too much blood  
in your brain, waiting.  
It isn't Bach he's playing

and you play your own  
imagination recorded on tape  
for me because you wanted me  
to have something, each voice  
of this lifelong fugue giving way  
to the next part.  
I swear you're his incarnate  
and I'm the one he never fell in love with.  
But I suppose it's too late now to start  
from the grave, the stopped heart.

## Concert

I watch his head beat out the rhythm  
on the air, hair in his face, wet with sweat,

feeling his resistance to push it back.  
He wears no watch, is timeless. Yet his fingers

age to frailty. I remember their touch on my skin, warm and pressing slightly, tickling like spider legs.

He doesn't see me now, under his bright lights,  
stuffed in starch white, buttoned cuffs and Italian shoes.

Though he knows I'm here.  
I'm always here, legs and arms crossed, breathing in hard ivory,

swallowing my heartbeat. I know when to applaud,  
I've heard it all before. In living-rooms, bathrooms, bedrooms,

under the sheets I know when he is  
done.