

yeng pway ngon

英培安

POEMS 2
[Personal Notes]

transcreated by
judith huang & goh beng choo


the literary centre

For Koon Yoke, my sister

Yeng Pway Ngon: Poems 2 [Personal Notes]
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YENG PWAY NGON: A SHORT INTRODUCTION

Born in 1947, Yeng Pway Ngon is a poet, novelist, playwright and critic who has published 24 volumes of poetry, essays, fiction, plays and literary criticism in the Chinese language. He has been translated into English, Malay and Dutch.

A recipient of Singapore's 2003 Cultural Medallion for Literature, Yeng was one of the signature modern poets of Malaya in the 1960s, and was editor and publisher of two literary magazines, *Teahouse* in the 1980s and *Encounter* in the 1990s. In 2000 he was a Fellow of the Taipei International Writers-in-Residence program organised by the Cultural Bureau of Taipei. His novel *A Man Like Me* won a National Book Development's Book Award in 1988. He continued to work quietly away from the spotlight for more than a decade but emerged again with a novel *Tumult* which won the Singapore Literature Prize in 2004. His latest novel *Trivialities About Me and Myself* was named by *Yazhou Zhoukan* [Asiaweek magazine] as one of the Ten Best Chinese Novels in the World for 2006; it also received the Singapore Literature Prize in 2008.

ABOUT THIS CHAPBOOK

Poems 2 [Personal Notes] is a selection of Yeng Pway Ngon's works published between 1969 and 1986, showcasing his more intimate poems, in which he explores the private spheres of love, loss and longing. In these poems, Yeng talks about the experiences of coming of age, serving National Service and living abroad, all filtered through his unique voice and philosophy. These poems also demonstrate his development as a poet as the tone of his poems turned from a more youthful and confrontational style to a more subdued, contemplative one. This is the second in a series of chapbooks featuring new English translations which explore the range of Yeng's poetry from the 1960s to the present.

ABOUT THIS SERIES IN TRANSLATION

First published in 2010, the titles in this series include:

- Poems 1 [Rebellion]
- Poems 2 [Personal Notes]
- Poems 3 [Self-exile]
- Poems 4 [Resurgence]
- Poems 5 [Other Thoughts]

怀人

我那时确是惶惑迷乱
蓄意悲秋甚至
病酒，其实不外是为了
掩饰我伤后的
颓丧

你为我赋诗。我知道
你也十分疲倦了
你倦于亡命，正打算从此
隐姓埋名。其实
江湖上杀戮流血的事，你已
久不过问

无奈你的仇家
始终不能
忘记多年前的你
你身上的
纹身

今夜风大
我披衣坐起。突然
想起你微醺时的谈笑，想起
许久没读到你的诗了
想起你那边
的夜，此刻应是
更黑更深

MISSING

i was confounded
and fell into moping, even flirted
with heavy drinking, really simply
trying to camouflage my old
sores

you wrote me a poem. i understand
you are tired of all this
you are done, fed up of being on the run, about to
disappear incognito. in fact
for a long time
you haven't cared about
the bloody clashes, or those riverfulls of red

regrettably this old enemy
still cannot
forget the old you
your body
your tattoos

tonight the wind is high
i sit up, pull on my jacket. suddenly
i think of your tipsy banter, think of
how it's been so long since i've read your poetry
think of you over there –
your night, which now
is darker, deeper...

想起我该写首诗给你
虽然你已没有诗句
回我了，虽然
或许你会看到，或许
你看不到

我写诗给你
不告诉你什么，只告诉你
我仍那么容易
激动，那么容易
流泪愤怒。尤其是
在写诗给你
的时候

1983年11月8日凌晨

think of how i should write a poem for you
even though you have long run out of poetry
for me; although
you may see it, although
you may not

i write a poem for you
but have nothing to say, just to say
i'm still so easily
moved, still so easily
reduced to angry tears. especially when
in the middle
of writing a poem for you.

8 November 1983, morning