

y e n g   p w a y   n g o n

英培安

POEMS 4  
[Resurgence]

translated by  
judith huang & goh beng choo



the literary centre

*For Koon Yoke, my sister*

Yeng Pway Ngon: Poems 4 [Resurgence]  
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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 4 [Resurgence]* is a selection of Yeng Pway Ngon's works published between 1990 and 2003. Marking a period of renewed innovation and creativity since the poems collected in *Self-exile*, these works showcase Yeng's trademark sardonic tone, now with an even stronger dose of off-kilter surrealism. This volume also documents innovations in form, with experiments in prosepoems, poems inspired by classical Chinese poetry as well as a strong, dominant vein of lyric poetry. They offer glimpses into the frenetic pace of life in an ever-changing city, as well as the deeper constancy and intimacy of mature love.

This is the fourth 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

Published from 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]

## 星光

我与哀伤的华发在失眠的枕头上疲惫地挣扎，窗外淅沥  
一如我回忆中一部电影的风铃响。中年的男主角  
在放映师的葬礼中目送一间正暴破的旧戏院  
岁月的笑声和泪影，全倒塌成滚滚寂寞的尘埃  
(我的戏院呢？我在那儿看过的最后一场电影呢？)

执着的放映师赶走执着的孩子（离开这里，现在就  
离开，不要想我，不要回头，咬着牙把过去  
切断）。或者他是对的。我在夜的深渊中  
辗转反侧，失神地望着妻熟睡的脸庞  
一头白发如我的男主角此刻正在离家数百里外的床上  
眼睁睁地看着自己消逝中的少年，消逝中的  
爱恋（窗外斑驳的光与影在妻沉睡的手臂上焦虑地  
纠缠、跳动、争执；我如一只迷失的候鸟，在  
吊诡的时间浓雾里怔忡地张望）。据说：  
自此以后在每个陌生的城市每个陌生的夜晚，在每个  
陌生的  
孤寂每个陌生的情欲中，他仍竭力地探索  
她褪了色的眼神她褪了色的体温  
他不断地更换女伴

## STARLIGHT

on the sleepless pillow i struggle wearily with my  
grieving grey hair. outside, the light patter of rain  
echoes the windchime's ring in an old film: the aging  
protagonist pays his respects at an old projectionist's  
funeral, as an ancient cinema crumbles about him in an  
avalanche of dust.  
(what's become of my cinema? what's become of the  
last film i savoured here?)

the stubborn old projectionist chases off the stubborn  
child (get out of here, get out of here at once! don't  
think of me, don't turn back, grit your teeth, forget the  
past!). perhaps he was right. here i am, in the abysm  
of night, tossing, turning, gazing blankly at my wife's  
sleeping face. meanwhile, a thousand miles from home,  
the protagonist, too, lies white-haired, sleepless, as old  
flames flicker and vanish before his eyes (outside the  
window the light casts dappled shadows on my wife's  
sleeping arm, mottling, tangling. i stare, confused,  
through the agitated time like a migratory bird, utterly  
lost). it has been said, ever since, in every alien city, in  
every alien night, in every alien solitude, in every alien  
tryst, he would sense, ever-present, her fading gaze, her  
fading warmth  
even in the blur of his endless conquests

戏院里的老乡噙着泪背诵一部旧电影的台词  
我的眼眶干枯，因为我已全然忘了少年时  
星光的名字（老放映师，我是留下来的人，我执意地  
留下来，但他们仍把我的记忆给拆了。）他们把  
我的痛苦、欢乐、爱恨和激情  
全部高价卖给了冷气设备的购物市场。我是留下来的人  
老放映师，我执意地留下来，如今  
我却一无所有，除了  
一头华发，一张地铁储值卡  
一身日本进口的衣裳

那么老放映师你是对了  
离去吧，电影已散场  
而我仍固执，留恋在自己的座位上  
是的，或许我是个过时的、过分执着的人罢  
老放映师，我留下来了，我执意地留下来  
我只想分享一点

你留给图图的  
美丽的星光

1990年9月21日

注：图图，电影“Cinema Paradiso”男主角的小名。  
“Cinema Paradiso”香港译作：“星光伴我心”

in the cinema, the townsfolk recite in unison the lines of  
an old film, their eyes filling up with tears.  
my eyes have dried out, for i have long forgotten the  
star-studded names of my youth (old projectionist, i'm  
one of the obstinate ones, i've resolved to stay behind,  
and yet, they have still dismantled my memory). they  
have taken my passion, this source of joy, of pain, of  
love and sorrow, and sold it all off for a tidy sum, to  
make way for an air-conditioned supermarket.  
i'm one of the obstinate ones,  
old projectionist, i've resolved to stay behind, and today  
i have nothing to show for it, nothing but  
a head of grey hair, an ezlink card  
and the Japanese-imported clothes on my back

and so, old projectionist, it's as you said  
get out of here, the show is over  
and yet here i am, still clinging to my seat  
perhaps i really am a hopelessly obdurate man  
old projectionist, i'm staying behind, i have resolved to  
stay behind  
all i ask

is that you leave me a sliver of that exquisite starlight  
you left for Toto\*

21st September 1990

\* Toto is the name of the protagonist in Giuseppe.  
Tornatore's acclaimed 1988 film "Cinema Paradiso"