

Poetry Series

**Phan Thanh gian**  
**- poems -**

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# Phan Thanh gian(LoL)

I would like to express and contribute some of my thoughts and ideas in words. Although I am not formally trained in poetry, I love the medium and would appreciate any comments or suggestions on my works.

## 5th Of May,2050 (Or Year 0)

The time has come, to virtualize your life!  
What you cannot see is invisible, yet it's real  
The real has no existence and your existence is unreal.

Your companion is a simulation.  
Our Great Representative has no shape or form,  
His Paramount Leader is beyond this realm.

Great Enemy is nowhere yet everywhere  
Martial Law is declared 'til the enemy is eradicated  
Finding the unseen is endless...

Without a lie there couldn't be Truth  
The untruth doesn't exist unless there is a counter-proof  
And the final judgment resides in the Simulated Reality

Democracy dictates majority rules...  
Majority demands democracy for all  
The cloak of the majority is omnipotent

Words are merely words  
Actions are merely actions  
Ends are means and means are unseen

It is time for the Beginning, my brave compatriots!  
Today marks the end of the dark past  
From now on Time was, is and will be timeless.

Phan Thanh gian

## 8: 05am Thursday

My eyes suddently blurred,  
That's all I could remember  
All I could see next are bystanders  
I'm looking up at them from the floor

How long have I been unconscious?  
It could have been two minutes,  
'Anyone can do CPR? ' I heard someone yelled  
My god, I'm so embarrassed...

I picked up my plastic bag  
Oh no, someone pulled the subway alarm!  
I could hear the constant din,  
My ears and eyes are throbbing

I'm so exhausted and confused  
I would like a cup of hot coffee or tea  
And I'm quite hungry  
I wouldn't mind a hotdog

'Are you ok? ' a woman from the crowd asks  
I nodded, but I must look awfully pale.  
The woman helped me onto a chair.  
I noticed I'm in my usual beige sweatshirt

It's in my favorite top since my grade ten  
That was the last time that I was sort of happy.  
I quit school and worked two jobs  
My partner left me years ago

And my little son is no longer with me...

Phan Thanh gian

# A Call To The Wandering Souls

On this auspicious occasion  
Fifteenth day of the seventh lunar month  
Let us pray for the world  
To alleviate the sufferings  
Of our dear departed souls

Let us share our offerings  
To the wandering damned ghosts  
Cold and hungry they roam  
Languishing between the realms  
Of the living and the dead

Among the top of the pine trees,  
Near the ravines and creeks  
They look for their loved ones  
Due to sudden, violent departure  
Crashed from the sky, drown in deep seas

Among the sandy fields  
In a ditch, shallow graves  
They died without proper burial  
In wars, remains torn to bits  
By shrapnel, by hell's fire

Among the newborn infants  
Only they couldn't last a few months  
From their frail constitution  
Born with deadly diseases  
Perished as soft bundle of short-lived tissues

Among the countless commuters  
Some never made it home  
Crushed between the wreckage  
Stuck in the road's carnage  
Their last breath drawn quickly

Among the office cubicles  
In the thick of the hectic world  
Their heart couldn't help but gave up

Arteries blocked, they croaked in pain  
Life in full swing suddenly no more

Among the unruly gangs  
Some paid dearly for their deeds  
In the alleys, in darkness  
Without anyone's aid  
One of the many things they've lost is their life

Most had no thoughts  
Of the last words to their dearest  
Many still try to cling on  
Hoping to be resuscitated  
But alas, it's too late

Let's pray for the enlightenment  
For all the wandering souls  
So that they would soon rest  
In everlasting peace  
Among the realm of the blissful void.

(Based on Nguyen Du's 'A Call to Wandering Souls')

Phan Thanh gian

# A Vagabond's Song: New World Disorder

The sky is my roof  
Your sidewalk, my washroom  
Haha, urban beautification  
Courtesy of my arse.  
Ostie, life is such a farce:  
You feed your fat cats filet mignons  
Can't even spare me crumbs?  
Your friends want billions,  
Merde, I only need a few crusty dimes!  
Tabarnak, my throat is dry again  
I'll have to stop the bemoaning  
Me go and make love to me gin.  
One day the world will turn:  
I'll wipe my feet with your top hat!  
Hahaha, hohoho, que ce sera beau!

Phan Thanh gian

# A War Torn Family

He once fought against national traitors  
Now he, himself, is branded a conspirator  
His whereabouts is known only to his tormentors  
Perhaps, he's now lying beneath the trees  
Or rotting on some far flung rice paddies...

She is searching for him in the jails, the morgues  
Crossing fast moving streams, deep gorges.  
Carrying her child, panting, she trekked forth  
Marching deep in the jungle, traversing large rivers  
Chilly nights, pitch dark roads give her shivers.

Phan Thanh gian



# A Wish

Wish we will always be this way  
Wish that smile is eternal  
Wish the days never wane  
Wish this night, everlasting it stays

Will you remember me  
When I will be old and gray  
Will you remember me  
When my tombstone is green with age

Phan Thanh gian

# Au Fond De Moi

Au fond de mon âme  
Un trou noir y trouve  
Ou il s'agrandisse...

Au fond de mon cœur  
Il y a un désert qui s'ensable,  
Recouvre tout mon destin,  
Tous mes désirs

Au fond de ma mémoire  
Il se trouve une crevasse  
Ou toutes mes pensées s'effondrent  
A jamais perdues

J'ai peur de l'avenir  
Quand je serai efface  
Sans une trace, dans l'espace infinie

Phan Thanh gian

# Blue Trinity: Ma Vie En Bleu

Look up at the lone desert's sky vibrant Blue  
Where the sumptuous cotton clouds were long gone.  
Hugging the undulating silent sand dunes,  
The azure sky tenderly whispers its innocent secrets.

Uncover the bruised skin, purplish, troubling Blues  
Dark clots conflagrate at the wounded flesh  
Paying solemn homage to life's incidental blunt edges.  
A creature's ultimate sacrifice to love, joy, survival...

Dive into the deep ocean's calming Blue  
Swim among immense whale's haunting hymns,  
Ethereal chants reverberate Neptune's inverted cathedrals  
Witness the meditative Blue absolved in eternity.

Phan Thanh gian

# Chameleon

As the Self is confused  
It acts like a chameleon.  
Changing into green  
When surrounded by leaves,  
Into brown when near the sand.  
What is behind it all is pure Awareness,  
It is the true nature of the Self.  
So stop striving to be something else  
And don't let the senses blind you.  
Be still in your perfect state of Awareness...

Phan Thanh gian

## Courage My Friends, Courage...

My friends, have faith and courage!  
Their walls may be nine metres thick and twice as tall,  
But your pure heart will overcome them effortlessly.

My compatriots, go forth and seek the truth.  
As their arrows may descend upon you like the autumn rain,  
But count on pervasive justice to shield you from harm

My dear brothers, be strong and persevere...  
Their ruthless ruse may wreak momentary violent destruction  
But your peace loving soul will be forever remembered

Phan Thanh gian

# Deliverance

At the moment you're born  
The bonding starts early on:  
Bound with your dear parents,  
Who cater to your every need  
The ties that bind  
To your family, your dearest  
All are inseparable, inviolable  
And as you get older  
The noose gets tighter  
Firmly attached by all sides  
To your belongings  
Your entourage grow roots within you  
It's heartbreaking  
Everytime you try to leave  
Once you meet your love-match  
Then the wildest fear invades your mind  
Fear of losing, of oblivion  
Afraid of detachment  
And of ultimate end

The truth seeker shall realize  
That once we let go of our world  
Our freedom is unbound  
In preparation for the final hours  
One performs the last rites  
By letting go of all worldly things  
And seek the eternal light.  
So do not be sad but rejoice  
Of the final act of deliverance  
Do not long to stay alive  
To hang on in vain  
Is to delude oneself  
In the desperate act of self-preservation  
One would suffer in distress  
So learn to detach and let go  
Of all things worldly...

Phan Thanh gian

# Destiny

Elusive as a snow hare in a blizzard  
In my dreams, I had you in my grasp!  
Awake and you vanish in thin air.  
To control you, is akin to quench my thirst,  
Your shadow drowns in my hungry tears  
Even the Universe could not escape your wrath,  
A meek mortal as I,  
Fought in vain... only to perish!  
Destiny, how powerful are thee?

Phan Thanh gian

# Duy Tan's Guilt Trip

Why are you looking at me like that?  
What's with those sad eyes?  
Your lips pout, cheeks saggy  
Your look is so pitiful, I want to cry.

It was once your country as it was mine  
But we both left it all behind.  
The Buddha said it's just an illusion,  
Einstein said it's all relative.

So dear young Emperor Duy,  
What can you possibly want out of me?  
You have got to be kidding right?  
I'm not the one who can help your people!

Nor your defunct dynasty can be revived.  
Just find solace in the absence of war  
Try to rest in peace, my young Lord  
I beg for your mercy, just let me be...

Phan Thanh gian



## Et Si Je L'Embrasse...

Je devine que ce serait si doux  
Si je la regarde avec tendresse  
Embrasser ses lèvres brulantes  
Au milieu de cette foule menacente  
En murmurant dans ces belles oreilles  
Des mots de passion et d'humour  
Mais je ne serai jamais capable de le faire  
Malgré moi,  
Malgré tout ce que je ressens en ce moment  
C'est ainsi que l'occasion est perdu dans le temps  
Le temps nonchalant sans aucune pitié  
Qui me faire son prisonnier pour l'éternité

Phan Thanh gian

# Eternal Garden

My bushes of tomatoes in the corner  
Who will water them?  
The cherry tree, once ripened  
Who will keep them free of pests?  
Those bright colourful tulips  
Will they still be admired?  
I gladly realized  
That they will still thrive  
Long after I'm gone.

Phan Thanh gian

# Exodus

Night fell suddenly  
The savages rule  
Birds take flight!

Dark, dank, in rags  
Miserable column of trekkers  
Beasts, humans in silence

Sorrow: their sole belonging,  
Soles worn to bone,  
Souls torn, tattered

In the last hours  
Unknown horizon awaits.  
Is this the end?

What's over there?  
More bloodshed and tears?  
Long rest, paradise?

Phan Thanh gian

# Fear Thy Lord?

Indeed, the Lord of the realm is fierce.  
But thou shall not run nor hide,  
Fiefs! Stand up to him with a sincere smile.  
Disobey his unjust rules but without violence  
'Tis the way of the civil disobedience.

Phan Thanh gian

# First Snow

Greyish clouds pile on the milky horizon  
Light snow scattered, nonchalant  
Dark roof instantly white  
Last few leaves tremble.  
How many seasons I have seen?  
O look, my first grey hair!  
Where had the time gone?  
Note to self:  
'You have not embraced your youth  
While it was here yesterday.  
So why are you now mourning for it?  
Pray that you will join the immortals'

(A tribute to Li Po and Tu Fu)

Phan Thanh gian

## Follow The Butterfly

One day, I will yearn nothing, spurn nothing.  
For now I live in my selfish cocoon  
One day, I will become a butterfly  
With wings not made from this world.

I now cherish my hermit-crab shell  
One day, I'll give it back to nature.  
Today, I revel in my Stockholm syndrome  
But my spirit will be released in the future

My flesh and blood matter now  
One day, I'll be one with anti-matter.  
The reflection of my image is now paramount  
But one day, light will traverse through me...

(these verses were inspired by 'The Heart of Awareness, translation of the  
Ashtavakra Gita')

Phan Thanh gian

# Footsteps Of Spring

Jolly orange sun peeks over clear horizon,  
Emerging, cheering song birds.  
Few dew crystals adorn tender shoots,  
Flower buds have yet to awaken,  
Entwining vines gracefully unfurl.  
Rythmic trickles, beckon a stream nearby:  
'You must hurry! Follow the footsteps of Spring! '

Phan Thanh gian

# Freedom At Last

The righteous path was carved out by generations of teachers  
From all the sages, writers and inquirers  
Their laborious writing and poems came to light  
Their discoveries lift up our veil of ignorance

Nothing would come from inhibition, or prohibition  
Rather from inspirations and cajoling compassion  
Neither violent threats nor empty promise will suffice  
Only wisdom could fulfill the truth seeker's soul

The realization that all beings are born free,  
Freedom of association, of disassociation  
That unburdened deeds are results of liberating thoughts  
Unbound thoughts flow from a clear conscience

Primordial pervasive darkness continuously gnawing  
Only the beacon of truth would unravel our murk  
Ancient mindless habits are the cause of all sufferings  
Enduring sufferings endeavour to enslave our existence

Today, I have finally caught a glimpse of freedom  
This wretched self has always being bound by darkness!  
By my own admission I'm a slave of my habits  
By knowing that I'm not free, I shall strive to be...

Phan Thanh gian



# From The Well

I look up from the bottom of my well  
The sky is clear except for few white clouds  
I could see the tilted light of a setting sun.  
What the rest of the world is like, I wonder...

Phan Thanh gian

# Guide Dog And Master

O blind master, my only duty is to serve you  
Wherever you go, I'll be by your side  
I'm your eyes, your faithful guide  
This harness binds our love  
Our companionship is inseparable  
Where you lead us, I would not know  
But I will keep you safe from harm's way

Phan Thanh gian

# Heaven And Earth

One who knows the numbers charts the sky  
One who understands words captures the soul  
Those combined, one can move Heaven and Earth.

Phan Thanh gian

# Homebound

Empty hearted, mind full of grievous sorrows  
Soul wrecked by howling cold, its merciless tolls  
My dry tongue is foreign to its muffled ears  
Eyes gawking homeward now blurred with years of tears

Only once in my dream, had I been Home  
T'was a familiar hug, in mom's embrace I roamed,  
My playful inner child basked in hazy summer breeze  
Never ever since, this home-longing ache ever appeased

Why, to go away was such a high price to pay!  
Has anyone ever warned the soon to be departed to stay?  
More wretched are those who long to return,  
For they seek to step twice in the same river's churn.

Phan Thanh gian

# Humankind

Most vain...  
Created by nothing,  
Claim to be the owner of all things!

Given a morsel of conscience,  
As a precious gift of Nature.  
They disregard it as weakness!

Born in harmony...  
End in mass hysterical destructions.  
Chaos wreaked upon on its own cradle.

Most vain of all creatures,  
Most vile of all species:  
Humans.

Phan Thanh gian

## Is Today Jan 12 Or May 12?

I am confused by the springlike temperature  
Like a finch chirping expecting the end of winter

Phan Thanh gian

# It Would Be Nice...

It would be nice...

To be able to see without sight  
Hear in total silence  
Feel without touch  
Witness the whole world  
Without being anywhere...

... because:

Even with perfect vision  
We are virtually blind  
Our ears are near deaf  
Humans crowd by the billions  
Mais hélas! we live in mindless oblivion

Phan Thanh gian

# Japan

Austere as the snow capped Fujiyama  
Lively as the geisha's cherry blossom kimono

Phan Thanh gian



# Je Veux Savourer La Lune

Que j'adore la lune!  
Mais si, je l'aime autant!  
La pleine, la demi et la croissant  
Moi, je l'aime dans toutes ces formes  
Que je veux bien la savourer  
La mijoter au chaleur de mon poêle  
Et la découper en p'tit morceau  
Tel qu'un pain au miel dore  
J'en déguste lentement,  
Si lent, comme si j'ai tout le temps  
Tout le temps de plusieurs univers.  
C'est ainsi que je consomme la belle lune  
Avec ses étoiles brillantes,  
Des jolies étincelles dans mon assiette.  
Tandis que le soleil s'enfuit  
Agripper par la peur,  
Qu'il sera le prochain...

Phan Thanh gian

# Karmic Dream

Kindly show me the vision of heaven,  
Eternally grateful my soul will be to you.  
Is it far or is it near?  
The road is long or is it short?  
How did you arrive into this dream of mine?

Phan Thanh gian

# King Cobra Monk

I worship power, I eat meat  
The Truth is whatever they told me  
Freedom is against my religion  
Amitafa! My words are pure venom  
I am the King Cobra Monk of Lhasa.

Phan Thanh gian

# King Richard's New Wealth

There was once a young king named Richard  
Who ruled over the fair land of the Polers  
Which His Majesty inherited from his ancestors

One day, the king summoned his trusted advisor  
'Tell me, wise one, how can I become wealthier? '  
The royal counselor was given time to think it over.

Few days later, the learned man came up with the answer  
'My Lord, there is someone who can make you richer! '  
The sovereign is excited to have found a way to prosper.

The monarch heard the advice and was content  
He says: 'I shall summon this gentleman par excellence'  
So a royal edict was at once dispatched by horseman

The scarlet letter is destined to a well-known businessman  
With sharp lips, bright eyes: a frugal gent  
After a quick glance, he paused.. then consents

In months, the merchant arrives with a caravan of horses and tents  
The royal castle celebrates his arrival with fanfare and dance  
The king welcomes the honourable guest into his den.

The royal Court gathers, eager for the advice,  
On how the great fortune might to be acquired.  
The guest says: 'Your wealth can be found just outside! '

'Do you mean within those tents are the fortune piled? '  
The businessman quietly shakes his head and smiles  
'Those tents are for your majesty's own rank and file'

'Explain at once you charlatan or you'll die! '  
The short tempered king wants to throw this traitor outside  
'Please let me explain Your Majesty' - the man decries

'If you just let me proclaim my 'Great Offer''  
'Then the whole story would sound a lot better'  
So the king and his court listen as the merchant proffers

'The neighboring Kingdom of Bond, the Land of Wey,  
'The surrounding tribes of Aarma offer his majesty  
'A mountain of gold, silver, diamonds, and rubies'

The king and his Council all hushed and gawk with glee,  
While the horses come in and spill their dazzling treasury  
All eyes glitter and cheeks blushed in jubilee

The old advisor suddenly asks while appears unease  
'What is been asked in return for this extravagant spree? '  
The merchant carefully replies to His Majesty

'Your Kingdom of Polers is the price, his Royal Highness! '  
'Those tents and horses too are yours to possess'  
'Once your Highness agrees, you can vacate in your best'.

After hearing this the royal Council is not impressed  
To this the king also looks visibly depressed  
All this treasures, but the Land is no longer his bequest?

The guest trader is ordered to wait three days  
While the king and his Council meet in a parlay  
The Council vehemently rejects the deal away.

But the king ponders secretly as he paces the hallway  
The dilemma sickened him, in an internal fray  
Finally he says: 'I'll take the treasures and part my way! '

The kingdom's moon casts a mournful shadow of gray,  
As the king departs while the merchant is here to stay.  
Soon after, all courtiers resigned or were chased away!

The Polers is in turmoil, commoners worry for their welfare  
While the former king is quite happy with his state of affaire  
He travels over his own domain without any care.

One day, the new mercantile government declares:  
All those with or without land are taxed, no one is spared  
All those with excesses would pay ten fold in share!

The former sovereign immediately pays what is fair

The government, then decreed more duties and fares  
The rich young man puts out again in despair

The new ruler institutes a multitude of reforms  
All taxes increase in rates and come in many forms  
None was spared from this tremendous political storm

Under corvée and draft, many families were torn  
Scores of mines were dug in the far flung forlorns  
Many deaths in many ways, as a new curse was born

Resources were shipped to the neighboring states  
In compensation for their tributes to the former king of late  
As the forests, rivers and hills of Polers dissipate...

Richard grows restless, ever since his abdication  
What was once his fair kingdom, now under a malediction  
With populace resentments for the new administration.

To appease his mind Richard travels abroad on vacation  
He makes several voyages to the neighboring nations  
Everywhere he goes, he is far from relaxation

His arrival was not greeted by a single invitation  
He was extorted money as a further humiliation  
Richard heads home, in broken spirit and financial condition

He finally comes near the frontier town of his homeland  
The Polers guards block him and make all sorts of demands  
He complies as any well mannered man

Once through with these ordeals, Richard came up with a plan  
Finally he exclaims: 'I must take back my regal command! '  
'Once a King, I cannot be a common man'

Richard packs up and heads to the capital of the land  
He comes with an angry protest letter in his trembling hands  
And asks to see the head of state for a rant

The merchant, now titled Chancellor, is notified  
All the politicians are convened to strategize

On how to handle this troublemaker within sight

The ex-monarch says to the new Chancellor: 'You're a sly! '  
'You've turned my people's life into miserable plight'  
'Give back my throne and I'll return your filthy pyrites'

The Chancellor smiles from his dais up high  
'You have a good heart sir, I must admire'  
'But the deal was struck and your kingship has since expired'

'Now have the guards arrest this preposterous usurper! '  
'For he has conspired a coup against peace and order'  
'By proposing to overthrow a legitimate leader'

Richard is imprisoned after his outrage  
Months later the Chancellor sends out a page  
He offers to release the prisoner from his cage

Richard is been offered to live in exile - so travel he may  
Under a plea bargain he can be on his way  
But Richard shall surrender all of his wealth to the State

So to obtain his freedom, dearly he must pay!  
How did Richard's world turn this way?  
A former king, now a penniless pauper gone astray

What good is wealth without freedom or freedom without wealth?  
The only thing Richard has left is his sorrowful self  
Near the end of his youthful years and in poorer health

The prisoner accepts the terms to be free from this hell  
So the Chancellor releases Richard from his cell,  
Then banished to the hinterland, he was left to himself.

The exiled convict is broken down in spirit  
As he sat by the street, many peasants walk by and spit  
They are Polers refugees, paying dues to this royal misfit!

Suddenly, an old man comes by his side to sit  
He says: 'My Lord! How did you ever come to this? '  
The stranger seems to have come from a past cloudy mist

Back when he had a kingdom and ruled as he sees fit  
The daily governance kept him out of boredom and in good wit  
Until he decided to give it all up for a greedy dream of his

The stranger is none other than Richard's former advisor  
Seeing the latter, his tears swell more than ever  
Richard says: 'Forgive my sins against Polers! '

The old man weeps silently along his former master  
Squat by the roadside, they share the pain with each other  
They reminisce the golden days before the nation was pilfered

At nightfall the old man brings his master home for shelter  
In his small hut beside a slow moving river  
After a meagre meal they fall asleep by the dying fire

Richard wakes up the next day appears vacant  
His old companion looks for signs of mental pertinence,  
In vain, he tried to revive Richard's mind from disturbance

Soon, the villagers gather to see Rick, the demented vagrant  
'I knight thee', he solemnly sworn in the neighbour's children  
'Now go and kill that monstrous serpent! '

Phan Thanh gian



# La Vie D'Un Tourbillon

Nous tournons dans un tourbillon béant  
Qui nous amène vers son centre néant  
Et quand nous ne serons plus ici  
Le tourbillon continuera toujours en rond,  
Il amènera encore autres jusqu'au fond...

Phan Thanh gian

# Lament For Phan Thanh Gian (19th Century Vietnamese Prime Minister)

Wings of dragonfly adorn your helmet  
Shoulders encrusted with claws of Imperial trust  
Humble beginning ends with such mighty office  
Second to none other than the Son of Heaven

West to East, North to South stormy seas converged  
Age weighed you down, heavier still are your tasks  
Prodded and probed by bayonets:  
Country, King and subjects drenched in blood

Embarked on your fateful journey West to uncertain future  
Your envoy to the City of Light was casted a dark spell  
Concessions brought your Nation down to the endless path of shame  
You served them your life to redeem the sins of ALL.

Phan Thanh gian

## Land Of Mindfulness (Notes To Self)

The limit is only in one's mind  
Where you are is not what matters  
The amount of wealth you have is meaningless  
Unless you can think wisely...  
What you contemplate is of utmost importance.  
Practice the arts of mindfulness  
Be at peace, as the world's third party observer  
Don't take side, not even yours...  
Seek the empirical truth in everything  
Never give up, never give in  
Persevere in practicing the arts of deep thoughts

Phan Thanh gian

# Life Is A Beach...

As I look back:  
My footprints disappear  
Under the lapping waves...

Phan Thanh gian

# Lines Of Wisdom

These are creases of elegance,  
Signs of dignified, timeless wisdom.  
Botox would only erase the self...

Phan Thanh gian

# Lullaby For Maryann

May you fall fast asleep in my arms  
As your angel eyelids close,  
Revel in your dreams of wonder  
You will soon see tomorrow's dawn  
And the many future starlit skies of hope  
No one can take away these gems from you,  
Now sleep well in your mother's lap.

Phan Thanh gian

## Lunch In A Refugee Camp

When I was only ten, in a refugee camp  
There, I saw a middle-aged man  
Lunching among his peers  
He appeared to be the leader of his pack

He was talking proudly, loudly  
About his violent, rebellious past  
I looked at his lunch,  
There were only ice, water and rice...

Phan Thanh gian

# Man-Eaters

Let's talk about the cannibals:

Not the naked ones with colourful wigs,  
Who eat and drink the human flesh and blood

Not the ones we learned in textbooks  
Whose tales you heard from far away land  
In the deepest of south-east-asian jungles

Such exotic, barbaric acts are so trivial  
Benign and confined to a few old tribes  
Wouldn't even measure up to more sordid types

I'm talking about the man-eaters living closeby,  
Who reside in the grandest of mansions,  
Nestled among the greatest of nations

They read the finest books,  
Extol the most virtuous ideals  
And drink the best of champagne.

Regarded by most with reverence  
Accolades, decorum surround, abound  
Smartest of tongues, sharpest of suits

Although members of the same species  
They are set apart from the masses,  
Carry themselves as higher breeds... godlike.

Yet their fields are covered in mournful white,  
The colour of the littered human bones.  
Their dark driveways: paved with rotten flesh

They consume their fellow man's dreams,  
Siphon livelihood from unfortunate souls  
Engorge themselves on children's laborous toils

Purveyors of man, butcher of kind  
Endearing appearance, yet heart of swine  
Always up to old tricks, with few new fixes.



A nod, a wink, a stroke of black ink  
Hundreds would perish, thousands vanish  
Many more families would wither in slums.

The reasons for such willful barbaric acts  
To torture, enslave and kill - to name a few  
For progress, ideology and personal fortune.

Phan Thanh gian

# Mesmerized Blind

Eternal blinding mirage in my eyes  
Restless night, I count the minutes go by  
In the early hours of radiant shine  
Cheeks of pearls of tears greet the glorious dawn  
Knowing you, as yourself ... but who am I?

Phan Thanh gian

# Modern Thebes

Where is your virtuous saviour now?  
I pity my Theban friends, they cry in vain  
Pulling out meshes of their own hair,  
They are clawing deep into their own skin

Who will look after your helpless denizens?  
Your orphans tremble in dark forest,  
Wandering aimlessly they stare in the void  
Lost, they stumble among thorny snares

What about old men, weaklings and widows?  
No longer cared for by their abled kind  
Unwanted, casted in piles  
Mere shadows waiting for their sufferings to end

Your clogged arteries are throbbing sores.  
Your palatial halls were erected on hallow ground,  
Now stained and choked in poisonous air.  
Arid fields are plagued by thirsty evil spirits

Clouds of locus block out the sun  
Devouring the peasant's meagre crops  
Their plea would reach the sky  
Yet those around them could not hear.

Your gleaming towers have turned into dark ruins,  
All that is left are the bare columns.  
Golden inscriptions of your glorious past,  
Lay burried deep under strata of detritus

My brothers, this scourge is yours to bear!  
I feel your pain, yet I can do little  
Has your mighty leader lost his way?  
His house in disarray, foundation rotten to the core

On our fingers, we count the capital's last days.  
Twitching among its chalky rubbles  
Are eminciated cheeks with yearning eyes,  
Witnessing this Eden's morbid end.

Phan Thanh gian

# Mourning My Husband - A Roadkill

Yesterday your face was within my sight  
Today, bits of your corpse spread on the roadside  
Staring at this woeful scene I sob, wail and cry

O my goodness, it's so so hard!  
I wept and hug our children, crawling in the dark  
They asked for their father - it just broke my heart

Our brooding still young, needing care  
I feel so helpless for their future welfare  
For us poor groundhogs, life is truly unfair

Day and night you ran to and fro  
Fetching meals so our newborns can grow  
I tend to the little ones, you scavenge in tow

Watch out for bald eagles, black hawks  
We dodged countless conniving red foxes  
And barely scraped by with a few skinny frogs

I admit, our marriage was far from blissful  
But some nights, the moon shone brightly, full  
Husband and wife together, we shared gruel

Content in our hole, by this busy turnpike's din  
A homestead, where we eke out menial living  
This dreadful motorway is also your undoing

My dear, I never had a chance to say goodbye  
Now your flesh, blood and fur splayed, sliced  
On this dark roadway under the cold moonlight.

Phan Thanh gian

# My Country, My Land, My People

The kimberlite ore of the North yields a bounty  
But would not bring me a single brilliant hope  
Western wheat fields spread as far as wide  
Yet my People go to bed hungry  
Schools of fish once swarmed the Grand Banks  
Strange!

Now it could not bring me a decent catch  
From my ancestors, I inherited this Great Land  
Yet I found no shelter,  
Among its thickest concrete jungles.  
From the corn first sown by my forefathers...  
Bring satisfactions to herds of cattle  
And I... without a single cob.

Please let me dance in the Rain  
I will sing in my earnest voice,  
With an empty drum by my side  
And my sorrows will be washed away  
By the sacred Spirits of my ancestors  
The wild grass will grow tall again  
While the Eagle stretches its wings on the horizon.

Phan Thanh gian

# My Dear Brother Wolf

How long has it been since we last met?  
Would you know the many troubles I had.  
My days were lonely without you and sister Bear.  
She departed not long after you left

Now let me take you to the windswept riverbed,  
Where we replenished our common blood.  
Below that orange horizon were endless plains,  
There we followed our cousins Bisons

Now our past can only be seen in brown prints,  
Through the Whiteman's lenses that captured our souls.  
Together we were constant companions,  
Watched over by the elder's Eagle Spirits.

Dear brother Wolf, there isn't much left.  
Your reclaimed realm is almost as narrow as mine,  
So together we stare in silence, then look down  
For this may be our last reunion...

Phan Thanh gian

# My Dearest Emile

Fragile poetic soul distressed by haunting verses  
Alone in wintry, sombre Montreal nights  
Your angelic wings spread, you travel in solitude

'Soir d'hiver', dare to read it alone without quiet tears!  
O, how I wish to travel in Nelligan's 'Le Vaisseau d'Or'!  
To venture in the poet's garden of fallen dreams...

How sweet sorrows caress, lull the mind into oblivion  
Autumn, snow, the Night, clear moons evoke sinister strokes  
Angelic melodic rhymes resound melancholic tunes

Unending sorrows engulfed your youthful spirit  
Confined to your darkened abyss until your final days  
Yet your luminous verses forever roam the Universe.

Phan Thanh gian



# My Dearest Son, When You Grow Up...

My dearest son,  
I bid you farewell!  
When you grow up,  
Please take care of your mother.  
In my absence,  
Learn to be strong and wise.  
I am in the thick of the battle,  
And in my foreboding heart I fear  
That this may be my last letter.  
But please don't grieve and cry  
Do not be sad, nor pitiful  
Of my premature end.  
Don't strain your tearful eyes  
Searching for your father's sight  
No more cussing your ears  
For the sound of my footsteps.  
It's not only natural  
But also a great valour  
For a man to die on the battlefield.  
From you, however, I would ask  
Nothing but one last favor:  
To avenge my death.  
In the name of filial piety,  
To protect the Altar of the State,  
Your family, your homestead  
Founded by our forefathers.  
I remember not too long ago,  
My own father has written  
The very same words to me  
When I was about your age.  
Just as my father's father  
Has done so as well.  
And I expect you to ask nothing less  
Of your own future children.  
And if this accursed war shall drag on  
For centuries to come,  
Tell your children  
To ask for the exact request  
To their children and so forth...

Because our enemies are tenacious  
I fear they may outlast us!  
So may God protect us,  
Our will and power shall prevail  
For another two more thousand years!

Phan Thanh gian

# My Last Twenty

This my last twenty dollars bill.  
Would I spend it on lottery tickets?  
Or a second-hand jacket from Goodwill?  
Maybe, better yet: my last decent meal.  
What would you do, my dear love?

Phan Thanh gian

# North Vietnamese Tragedy: Famine Of 1945

I'm only twelve:

Sir, ma'am can you spare me some rice  
My mom is lying on the street over there  
My baby brother still tries to suckle,  
While mom is waiting for Death to spare her hunger  
Dad was clubbed to death... for stealing rice

The field is bare:

It's so quiet, not even a song bird or insect in sight.  
My stomach is too weak for any solid food,  
The walk from my home village was long and arduous.  
Corpses lined the sidewalk but nobody to bury  
Black crows circle high above... waiting

Phan Thanh gian

# Nova Pax Romana

We are the new Romans  
The Greeks inspired our great republic.  
Our senators wear spartan white,  
Their stains must be bleached.  
Hot bath washes away our filth.

Absolute peace shall reign the Empire  
Hail Cesar! Absolute force if needed  
Democracy is only for the weak.  
Barbarians need to be colonized  
O! 'em crude and uncivilized!

Brave Roman Legions march on!  
Go forth to enlighten those subhuman races.  
For the glory of Rome, we provide bread and circus.  
Once their bellies full they frolic,  
Our august Emperor will think for their lot.

Phan Thanh gian

# Old Castle

Where has the sound of court music gone?  
The mossy outer walls have darkened in time  
Neglect set in, stones crumbled  
Care taken away, worn is the carved facade.

Embroidered dragons once flew over that roof top  
Our august Lord found safety in these jade chambers  
Seat of power - t'was the most eminent place  
The citadel's clout radiated in all cardinal directions

Benevolent reign snuffed out by fate most cruel  
Clan's crest fell, ancestral tombs desecrated  
Noble descendants exiled in forsaken corners  
Horses, sedans vacant beneath hollow wind chimes

What a sorrowful sight: empty castle shivers at twilight  
Gaunt tower casts long shadow over cold moat  
Main gate wide open, burnt doors unhinged  
Last defenders' moan echoes in moonless nights

Phan Thanh gian

# Pervasive Nature Of Awareness

Rabbits chew on grass  
Children and I gnaw rice  
Thunder roars, lighting strikes  
All run for cover...

Phan Thanh gian

## Pigeon's Life

Roaming wild, I once fly freely  
Now I'm bound in this overcrowded city  
Scavenging for strewn left over filthies  
Loud seagulls, meek squirrels keep me company  
So how well would these wings serve me?  
A mere chicken no less, I will soon be...

Phan Thanh gian



# Profane Vs Sacred

The mind and the body  
The sacred and the profane  
One is without limit  
The other confined

Endless is the imagination  
Life faces inevitable demise  
The mind endeavors higher aspiration  
Simple needs nurture the flesh

Headstrong we're undaunted  
Weak-kneed we falter  
The spirit thinks it's everlasting  
Perishable lives often shortlived

Attempting to unravel the mystery  
Of the object versus the subject,  
Practical against ideal  
We're often entwined, confounded

Matter and energy  
Latter is unseen yet all powerful  
Former is seen yet inert  
The two inseparable, universal

A mindless body is lifeless  
Bodiless mind is nothingness  
Nothing is substance without form  
Nor shall we be slaves to materialism

Wrestling in an eternal struggle  
The mind pushes the outer limit  
Constantly grounded by the physique.  
Idealism and realism in a cosmic swirl.

Phan Thanh gian

## Remembering Those Ikea Days...

I saw you at the Islington station the other day:  
Your once luscious dark hair, now dry, unkempt...  
Where are the twinkles in your eyes?  
Aww and that gaunt face, that frown!  
How many offspring have you got for him?  
O, I remember we were so young back in the days  
Remember our first Ikea bed? LOL

Phan Thanh gian

# Rumination After Rumination

I used to linger near the palaces of opulence  
Now I left them for less than a pittance

I no longer hold on to any faith  
As I long to reach for Nirvana of Reasons

I have lived past the fifty thousandth reincarnation of Lucy  
Why every 'new' sensation still shudders my back?

I have almost reached oasis of tranquility  
But my mind is stirred by the lost of Passion

O elusive self, where do you reside?  
Invisible mind is trying to hold on to the tangible in desperation...

Phan Thanh gian

# Schoolyard Bullies

School bell rang, all kids yell in joy  
The two bullies ran into the hallway  
They stomp the ground in menacing way  
George grits his teeth, Tony locks his fists  
They pair up and look for trouble

Once out in the yard, the kids scattered  
The bullies exit with eyes hungry for a fight  
Some kids cowered, others joined them  
A few look on from a distance, fearful  
George got shot by a sling!

Uh Oh that means big trouble!  
He looks around for the one who dunnit  
Then he grabs a kid he knew  
So Tony came to his aid, to beat up the kid to pulp  
As others looked on in fear...

Phan Thanh gian

## Secrets Of Wind Chimes

I hope one day to know your secrets.  
My pretty chimes, where the Wind has been?  
Which corner of the world will it go next?  
Are you just a messenger of the Wind?  
Or you also have your own story to tell?  
If the angry Storm is coming,  
Then please do warn us mortals.  
The other night you sounded ominous  
Were you foretelling an ill omen?  
Today your bright notes are joyous!  
What is it? The arrival of Spring my dear?  
Foreboding the future or reminisce the past,  
You're just as mysterious as a smiling cat...

Phan Thanh gian

# Seek Your Awareness

So what is it that we're made of?  
Are we the anticipation of the fishermen's dawn?  
The lassitude of farmers' dusk?  
Those things come and go, yet we prevail.

We are the knowledge, wisdom in time?  
These may easily be gained or lost  
We are still unchanged.  
We exist during daylight as in darkness.

Loneliness defines us? Or social status?  
Just as title comes and goes, so does isolation...  
We are unfazed by these finicky seasons.  
You ARE - with or without company.

Are we then heroes of bygone tales in a recast?  
Such delusion can easily confuse the fools.  
But as disciples of Truth, we look beyond.  
We would ask: what is the fabric of the Self?

Are we the perception in the mirror?  
Just as a chameleon skin shows,  
The mirror has a thousand tongues.  
So what are we other than our reflections?

If we're not aware how can we BE?  
From the pile of bones to a lock of hair.  
Without awareness, they are just that.  
Awareness is everything and nothing IS without it.

Awareness is not a belief nor disbelief  
Neither young nor old  
Nor compassion nor dispassion  
Just be aware of your own awareness!

(inspired by The Heart of Awareness, a translation of the Ashtavakra Gita)

Phan Thanh gian

# Sight

My vision is blurred  
Words dance in front of me  
In wild, vertigo-induced rhythms  
Colours melt into fine grains of sand  
Familiar faces become unrecognizable  
Unable to foresee my own future,  
Past life faded into oblivion...  
No wonder, the all-seeing eyes are precious  
Without them, god would be oblivious

Phan Thanh gian

# Slay The Dragon Of Contra-Dictions

Introducing:

Human civilization - a brilliant invention?

Or merely a sum of its diverse contradictory ideals?

We must save this, but we can destroy that...

Self-righteous deeds for self-serving aims.

Thus:

- Is human justice standing on a slippery scale?
- Meted out by the ruler: us, to the ruled: them.
- Today's friends will be tomorrow's foes?
- Foolish worshippers of primal egotistic instincts.

Maybe:

- There is more to life than the wheel of karma.
- We shall not merely live for the sake of survival
- Shall we then survive to serve a nobler calling?
- There is a quest worthy of a lifetime endeavor?

Phan Thanh gian



# Smiley Cowboy

Hey smiley cowboy, is there anything that I missed?  
Why the smirk, the wry smile?  
Please explain, without the poker face this time...  
And please no more clown makeup, nor blank stare  
The depth of your eyes betrayed your thinly plastered smile!

O Heaven! your calvary has trampled upon Eden,  
Such destructions, devastations: under its steel hooves.  
What you said isn't exactly straight from the horse's mouth.  
Things can't be undone and the dead cannot return to life  
Only if the wailing souls could speak... tell us how and why?

Phan Thanh gian

# Solace In Solitude

Dearest, we are together at last  
Will you stay with me for a while?  
How have you been keeping?  
I will never forsake your company.

Please don't leave me here by myself,  
At the mercy of faceless crowds.  
Time has only deepen my fond memory  
Of the intimate moments we had.

My dear sole Solitude!  
We're each other's soulmate.  
I will never feel lonely...  
So long as i'm alone by your side.

Phan Thanh gian

# Song Of Dreams

The clock whispers in the blue night,  
I hear hymns sung by angels,  
My dream awaits at the bedroom door...

Phan Thanh gian

## Spring Of Autumn (In High Park)

Weakened branch clung on to last season's dead leaves  
Gusts of darkened wind still threaten the Northern sky

Shy glimmers of pale green - hints of hope lurk nearby  
Parched yellow ground has yet to come alive

Wicked icy pond, littered with algae's cadavers  
Starved squirrel jitters, hungers for warmth, freshness

Spring! Yet barren grayness stretches far and wide  
Autumn has not given up its last fight...

Phan Thanh gian

# Still Dreaming Of The Sun

I'm still dreaming of the Sun...  
The One who embraces my inner self,  
With all of His glorious rays.  
He sets me down on waves of mirage  
With His breathless infinite warmth

I can still see Him when I'm sightless,  
As His brightness enlightens my every thought  
And caresses every inch of my skin.  
O radiant Star of the Earth!  
Your passionate fire consumes my heart.

Phan Thanh gian

# Summer Mind Trip - By A Complaining Monk

I'm certainly still alive of course!  
There is no doubt about that,  
Because I'm still making full use of my senses  
But by good grace, my mind has already flown away  
Without its baggage: this lost, decrepit body

My spirit, joyous, has soared high, far off to the Ever land  
Kissing the hands of the Mighty Creator,  
Checked itself gaily into heaven's Shagri-La  
Staying there in a lasting, peaceful state  
Enjoying some fine wine with the Immortals!

Pitiful, though is this unsightly heap of flesh  
Sweltering, festering with squirmy maggots  
Enduring this unending summer heat wave  
Trapped in an ever tightening padded room  
Curtain drawn, air stale with foul stench

The good books were long on extolling the soul  
Of its wondrous virtues and higher state of consciousness  
Yet these wise tales are virtually silent –  
About what I shall do with the wrinkled skin, brittle bones  
While waiting for its natural state of decay...

Phan Thanh gian

# The Ablest Administrator Of The Empire

(The precious nature of a great statesman is worth more than his weight in saffron) .

We heard of a name that brings respect  
It is the one with such complete loyalty  
To the Country, Emperor, colleagues and the people  
He who has done so much for so many

A man without equal, never before, none after  
One with foresight, candor and highest ethics  
In the Palace, at large, he's the example of class  
Admired by all, revered by many

In the forefront, he stands with dignity and purpose  
Yet his utmost goal is to service others  
With moral, assertiveness and justice  
Few came close to his abilities, quality

If there is one who may right all the wrongs: it is he  
If there is such person as the ablest civil servant: it is he  
If the country can be saved by one person, is he  
The embodiment of genius, of courage and compassion

Phan Thanh gian

# The Bridge Over Danforth

Over its shores, western side: the bright city lights  
Eastern ends with the joyous agora's sight  
At the foot of its span, darted by stream of red, yellow fireflies

The tall railing has sprung up - locking many escapees' souls  
It could have been a beautiful day of sunshine: the bridge sighs.  
Yet, final darkness is all that they could see ahead

Have they considered the time given to them?  
Enough time to amend with their past?  
Tomorrow, a new day would come: with a gentle soothing breeze...

Phan Thanh gian



# The Drought (Prior To The Deluge)

In the year of the Golden Ox  
A drought swept the northern land,  
It brought a long lasting famine.  
So a monk fasted and prayed

His fasting did not help  
Nor his prayers were heeded.  
The young monk cried in desperation  
Then, he made an audacious attempt

The friar climbed the highest peak  
There he yelled to the Sun  
'Have mercy upon on us! '  
'Please stop this scorching heat'

To this the great Sun replied:  
'Dear, I'm unable to help'  
'That's Earth's problem'  
'Ask her to stop revolve around me'

Desperate, he climbed down,  
Went to the deepest abyss.  
He yelled out to Mother Earth:  
'Please get away from Sun ma'am! '

Earth gave him a chilly shrug:  
'You're insane my little monk '  
'That would kill most of you! '  
The monk felt even worse...

'Better talk to Rainclouds' she said  
The monk screamed upon the sky  
'It's time to let it pours! '  
Lone white cloud giggled

'Sir, you need to ask Wind'  
'He needs to bring me vapour'  
'Without it, obviously I cannot rain! '  
The monk's patience was worn thin

But he managed to howl at the wind  
'Please bring us water vapour '  
The Wind said: 'Ask the Sea'  
'She has to give me humidity'

Young monk went completely bonkers  
'Sea, what are you waiting for? '  
Sea was taken ill but still replied  
'You must be blind monk '

'You people washed down so much filth'  
'Your human wastes and debris'  
'Why would I help you? '  
The monk woke up finally.

'Is this curse our fault? ' Monk said  
'Who else you ingrates' Sea replied  
Then, the angry Sea stormed:  
'Here comes all your dirty water! '

Phan Thanh gian

# The Exiled Soul

There is no one here  
Only the sounds of the howling wind,  
On this desolate rocky outcrop.  
There is nothing here,  
But the jagged edge cliffs  
And waves of foaming sea,  
Crashing into the deserted beach  
Wearing out the stubborn pebbles.

This remote island will one day,  
Bury my bleached bones  
Hide the last traces of my nostalgia.  
This vast emptiness will one day,  
Witness my inconsequential departure  
With a docile, emotionless whisper  
As it has welcomed my arrival  
With its trivial polite embrace.

Phan Thanh gian

# The Finer Art Of Peace

(In praise of Mahatma Gandhi)

Have we known the many sorrows of war?  
Now, have we also known some joy of peace?  
Which one would you rather have it be?  
How simple yet hard are our choices.

We sacrifice everything, to protect it all...  
Such a paradoxical foolishness!  
Ones who advocate violence to win peace,  
Are only blinding you with their fear

When peace will be a ubiquitous,  
As the sun shining on all beings?  
It is when we know we're all Children of Light  
And everyone deserves its brightness

When wars drag on for countless centuries,  
Eternally dark as the moon's other half  
It is when humans refuse to embrace peace,  
Burrow themselves in their own toiling torments

Peace demands patience, tolerance  
It demands our understanding, all our wit...  
We must rise to the challenge of fulfilled harmony  
We shan't give in to our hateful beastly side

Peace requires our courage, all of our passion  
By learning to reason and embrace.  
It is finer to live a straw hut peacefully  
Than have marble mansion borne of conflicts

Martial master Sun Tzu - with all my due respect  
I admire your candor and intention  
Yet I must beg to differ on the basis of principle:  
We as humans must believe in peace or perish!

Employ Diplomats

Better to invest in a few thousand peacemakers  
Than to employ a standing army of mercenaries  
The former generate greater goods, less costly  
The latter bounds to wreak havocs dearly!

Prepare for peace... by making peace

If you prepare for war - then war will be inevitable...  
As it's a predictable self-fulfilling prophesy  
If you want peace, be sincere  
Learn the arts of negotiation... bring trust to the table

'An eye for an eye...

Will make the whole world blind'  
So look up to see the brothers and sisters  
And have a kinder gentler look  
At each other in trust and sincerity  
Have faith in humanity, have faith in ourselves...

Blinded by sinister thoughts  
We push each other towards MAD  
Enlightened by hope,  
We carry one another to pacific ideals

The war drums deafening our ears  
With their patriotic fervor and hateful infusion  
But I tell you this my dear friends:  
Patriotism has never been a friend of violence

Armed conflict tears each of us apart  
Widows, orphans refugees stream in droves  
Away from the fire of hell, screaming tears  
No good deeds can redeem all the killings

Father fought against son, child against mother  
Brothers are asked to murder their own kins  
Neighbors against neighbors, kith against clans  
Such is the horrible, raw nature of war

No amount of justification can outdo the wrongs  
Many mountain of bones, countless rivers of blood

Piled up high, overflowed by the pillage, the rape  
The destructions, the wanton vicious cycle of revenge...

Phan Thanh gian

# The One

There is a certain flower,  
Among the countless petals.  
There is a special stone,  
Hidden beneath the mountain.  
There is a unique heart of gold  
Unseen by the naked eyes.  
There is a precious soul,  
Shining its light in vast darkness.

Phan Thanh gian

# The Path

The fasting does not bring salvation  
But it will clear your mind  
From the muddle of pleasure killings  
So as to purify your conscience

The prayers alone do not bring peace  
But it will help you focus  
And avoid the upheaval of emotions  
In order to calm your spirit

The good deeds alone will not enlighten you  
Yet it will alleviate the sufferings  
Of the many unfortunate souls  
And bring about unity of purpose

Those who seek the Path  
Shall walk firmly in confidence  
And not falter even at the very sight of Death  
For it is the final ultimate gate to Life.

Phan Thanh gian



# The Wanting

I am the very thing that makes you feel alive  
I make artists daydream, poets toil 'til dawn  
The Kiss, the Ninth are a few works of mine.  
By myself, I've erected the Great Wall,  
The Pharaoh's tombs and the Taj

I've been called the Unobtainable Perfection  
By creation I'm omnipotent, omnipresent.  
You can feel me in your unquenchable thirst, unfulfilled hunger  
My name was scorned, my shadow was cursed  
Only the fools ever denied that I've always existed

My scent turns you mad in the sleepless nights  
My touch suffocates, intoxicates you with inspirations  
The sweetness of my words paralyzes your thoughts  
For as the Bearer of Light, I am also the Weaver of Truth  
The Animator of corpse, and the Destroyer of Death.

Vast hordes of men and beasts fought to pleasure me!  
Empires hastily built - kingdoms fell overnight:  
All for a glimpse of my bare chest.  
Vessels sailed the four seas in my quest  
O! My cup is always lavishly filled with your peer's drunken lust!

Though I am without shape, nor substance  
In you, my manifestations are infinite.  
From me, springs your drive, your every Desire  
It is I: The essence of your eternal Love,  
...and your love of the Eternal

In my womb: all things flourish, all things perish.  
Without me, the Wheel of Karma screeches to a halt.  
Thus you shall bow and wait for my command!  
But if you know me by my true Name,  
... then I shall be no more.

Phan Thanh gian

# There Is No Glass, Only Pure Water

The optimist, so they say  
Sees a glass half full of water  
The pessimist sees half empty glass  
A truth seeker only sees pure water

Phan Thanh gian

# Triumph Of A Lifetime

Triumphant welcome greets the Conqueror of Light  
Infinitely joyous chants, many enthralled by his return  
This is the day when the Sun's Arch crowns his path  
Our citizen's soul overwhelmed with fervor of love  
Never again in one's lifetime will one witness  
In glorious presence, his grace shines the sky  
United, the nation admires his great might  
Scurried away are dark evils at his first sight...

Phan Thanh gian

# Truth

Climb beyond your Everest of Desires  
Wipe your Gange of Tears  
Trek the Sahara of Karma  
And the Truth will reveal itself...

Phan Thanh gian

# Under The Emperor's Toes

Under the Emperor toes I discuss freedom  
Wiggle at his feet I long for reform  
Squashed as fallen leaves are my rights  
Yet I still dream of a brighter future for the future

Phan Thanh gian

# Vegetable Vendors

'Five for two dollars, two for one! '  
Yelled the ones in straw hat  
Men, women: aged, riped as the vegetables they sell  
Wilted, weathered, leathery, tanned melon skin.  
Twenty five below in February, well or sick,  
Sunday, Easter, Christmas: everyday they toiled  
By their stands at the street corner, they always stood.

'Lettuce, chilli pepper, spearmint! '  
Very few foreign words, living in a foreign land.  
They have crossed the countless rivers of tear,  
Overcame mountains of back-breaking chores.  
Have yet any regrets for the gut wrenching farewells,  
While away from ancestral tombs beyond the Eastern seas,  
Their souls closer to the yonder Yellow Spring.

Phan Thanh gian

# Vendeuse De Poisson

Je m'appel Masako  
J'ai quatre-vight-douze-ans  
Je vend des poissons  
Sur l'ile de Shodoshima

Phan Thanh gian

# Welcoming Dusk

The eventual arrival of dusk  
Is it so unexpected?  
Why haven't we thought of it more?  
It's just as predictable as sunrise.

As the day's buzzing warmth fades  
Cold dusk seeps within us.  
When long silence pervades the air  
When twilight draws its last breath.

Bring us the long awaited rest  
Because we had daylong struggle  
Bring us the soft blue dream  
Because our living world is harsh red...

Phan Thanh gian



# What Is Money?

I grow my own rice,  
I till my own cabbage field  
Those pink piglets: i feed them  
This smooth liquor: I distill each drop  
My plum tomatoes: I pick from my garden  
My sweat and tears sown in the black soil  
The tender friendships: I cultivate with love  
These lofty ideals: I shall never forsake  
So what is money?  
So when would I ever need it?

Phan Thanh gian

## With Your Eyes...

There is something intelligent in those eyes  
They say a lot more than a thousand words  
Without uttering a single whisper

They speak volume of kindness and hope  
Looking directly into mine, they peer straight into my soul  
The inquisitive yet tender questions they probed...

With them you can conquer wickedness, evil's darkness  
They will shine until the last hours before the time ends  
Will you focus them on all of mankind or a simple life?

Phan Thanh gian

# Words

You're so thin on colour  
So few in numbers  
Too limiting, too narrow of scope  
Meagre in shades of nuances

I need more of you  
Many many more  
Countless multitude of you  
To express the infinite ways I feel

Phan Thanh gian

# Yesterday's Tomorrow

When will the future come?  
The one you promised us yesterday.  
When will the end of darkness come?  
Will the magical beginning ever arrive?  
Or this vicious Karma is eternal...

Phan Thanh gian

# You

Bliss, sorrow or fear  
These are manifestations of the mind  
Pain, sickness and decay  
These pertain to the flesh  
You are none of the above  
Remember my dear  
You are only pure awareness

Phan Thanh gian

# Your Gift

The undershirt you gave me last Christmas:  
Is made of plain, thin cotton,  
It even has a little hole in it :)  
But I will cherish it even more than...  
The Emperor's bestowed silk embroidered brocade...

Phan Thanh gian

# Your Temple Of Adoration

Bread and water kept me alive,  
But your Words are the very enrichment of my soul...

In my mind, I have edified a truly grand temple  
With flying roofs interlacing the misty clouds  
Perched over luscious tranquil inner courtyards  
Tall ceilings supported by a forest of stoic pillars,  
Topped by endless waves of intricate curved arches.  
Your dear Name: carved on the towering front gate  
Masons inscribed your auspicious prayers on high walls  
Exotic song birds echo the vast sanctuary  
Peacocks, butterflies dazzle visitors in kaleidoscopic hues  
Artists pore over their paintings of your exquisite portrait  
The air reverberates chants at your solemn service,  
Accompanied by uplifting strings of sweet harmonies.  
Numerous good deeds are being done,  
All in your immaculate Name.  
Myself, I have been fastidiously fasting and ritually cleansed  
Dressed in silken embroidered brocade and tall hat  
Hands clasped in submission, bowing to your effigy  
As high priest, I've sworn to dedicate my own unworthy life,  
In the construction and upkeep this holiest of shrines  
With the deepest of thoughts at your worship  
To glorify your everlasting presence in me...

Phan Thanh gian

# Your Touch

As the antidote to Midas  
Your touch brings Life to the lifeless,  
It melts away my fear...  
It dispels my loneliness...  
Brings order to my chaotic realm,  
And built my whole New World.

Phan Thanh gian