



From Breadwig.

Yu Xinqiao

To Die Is to Perish in Your Hands

What you don't ignite with your own hands
Cannot be called a blaze
What you don't touch with your own hands
Cannot be called a gem
You! O you finally appear
We only face each other once
This heart is smashed to pieces
This world crumbles altogether
Because your beauty is like a steel knife, unsheathed

What you don't kill with your own hands
Living becomes meaningless.
What you don't shatter with your own hands
Can never be put back together
In this life, to die
Is to perish in your hands

—translated from the Chinese by Clara Hsu

Born in Fujian and raised in Zhejiang, Yu Xinqiao is one of the most important poets in China today. A middle school dropout, Yu became a popular speaker on the subjects of poetry and Chinese culture in the years following the June 4 crackdown. In 1993 he called for a “Chinese Renaissance Movement,” a proposal welcomed by many but frowned upon by the government. He was subsequently jailed for eight years on dubious charges. While many mainstream journals, in fear of censorship, shy away from his work. His poem “If I Have to Die,” set to music, was a big hit and his other work is now tremendously read among Chinese readers.

Translator Clara Hsu was a nominee for a Pushcart Prize in poetry (2001). Her first book of poems, *Mystique*, received honorable mention at the 2010 San Francisco Book Festival. Some of her poems can be found in *New Millennium Writings*, *The Tower Journal*, *The Other Voices International Project*, *Asian Cha* and *Red River Review*.