**Popcorn – Carol Chan**

5pm, and I’m craving popcorn, one of those afternoons

that smell of warm rain that hasn’t yet fallen, the smell

of warm, baked roads and the anticipation of a real good

wash-your-migraine-out storm. I want popcorn.

Popcorn in a bag from the margins of Bangkok, caramel crisp

coffee popcorn from that loved-up train station where

the corn-popper is also a barista who lovingly burns my coffee.

I’m sure she never drinks that filth. But she’s not here

so I make do with cheap popcorn from 7-11. I almost miss her.

The bag says it’s made in Singapore, product of America.

So much of what we eat and do is a product of America

and China. Just last week a Chinese migrant told me he’s never

drunk canned Chinese herbal tea with his meal before. You’re joking,

I said, surely you drink tea with meals. This isn’t tea,

it’s a soft drink, *qi shui,* he insists, and by the way

in China only white collared workers drink coffee.

His small eyes widen as he adds, *and the food here is inedible.*

Your people mix different foods together on a plate. It’s all a mess

and tastes nothing like home. He should know; he’s a chef back home.

I don’t tell him that this is home on a plate for me, that in Melbourne

where I lived for four years, I missed this shit everyday.

He spends his days here slicing gourmet cakes, twelve hours a day,

in a factory I have never seen. Those delicate cakes sold in cafes

slicing up his hours, graying those small, surprised eyes.

But now this popcorn will have to do. It’s too soft and plasticky,

tasting of nothing but 7-11 florescent lights

and first-world boredom,

human dreams.

**Stopping By The Woods On A Snowy Evening – Robert Frost**

Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village, though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

**An Absolutely Ordinary Rainbow – Les Murray**

The word goes round Repins,
the murmur goes round Lorenzinis,
at Tattersalls, men look up from sheets of numbers,
the Stock Exchange scribblers forget the chalk in their hands
and men with bread in their pockets leave the Greek Club:
There's a fellow crying in Martin Place. They can't stop him.

The traffic in George Street is banked up for half a mile
and drained of motion. The crowds are edgy with talk
and more crowds come hurrying. Many run in the back streets
which minutes ago were busy main streets, pointing:
There's a fellow weeping down there. No one can stop him.

The man we surround, the man no one approaches
simply weeps, and does not cover it, weeps
not like a child, not like the wind, like a man
and does not declaim it, nor beat his breast, nor even
sob very loudly—yet the dignity of his weeping

holds us back from his space, the hollow he makes about him
in the midday light, in his pentagram of sorrow,
and uniforms back in the crowd who tried to seize him
stare out at him, and feel, with amazement, their minds
longing for tears as children for a rainbow.

Some will say, in the years to come, a halo
or force stood around him. There is no such thing.
Some will say they were shocked and would have stopped him
but they will not have been there. The fiercest manhood,
the toughest reserve, the slickest wit amongst us

trembles with silence, and burns with unexpected
judgements of peace. Some in the concourse scream
who thought themselves happy. Only the smallest children
and such as look out of Paradise come near him
and sit at his feet, with dogs and dusty pigeons.

Ridiculous, says a man near me, and stops
his mouth with his hands, as if it uttered vomit—
and I see a woman, shining, stretch her hand
and shake as she receives the gift of weeping;
as many as follow her also receive it

and many weep for sheer acceptance, and more
refuse to weep for fear of all acceptance,
but the weeping man, like the earth, requires nothing,
the man who weeps ignores us, and cries out
of his writhen face and ordinary body

not words, but grief, not messages, but sorrow,
hard as the earth, sheer, present as the sea—
and when he stops, he simply walks between us
mopping his face with the dignity of one
man who has wept, and now has finished weeping.

Evading believers, he hurries off down Pitt Street.

**The Surfer – Judith Wright**

He thrust his joy against the weight of the sea;
climbed through, slid under those long banks of
foam--
(hawthorn hedges in spring, thorns in the face stinging).
How his brown strength drove through the hollow and coil
of green-through weirs of water!
Muscle of arm thrust down long muscle of water;
and swimming so, went out of sight
where mortal, masterful, frail, the gulls went wheeling
in air as he in water, with delight.

Turn home, the sun goes down; swimmer, turn home.
Last leaf of gold vanishes from the sea-curve.
Take the big roller’s shoulder, speed and serve;
come to the long beach home like a gull diving.

For on the sand the grey-wolf sea lies, snarling,
cold twilight wind splits the waves’ hair and shows
the bones they worry in their wolf-teeth. O, wind blows
and sea crouches on sand, fawning and mouthing;
drops there and snatches again, drops and again snatches
its broken toys, its whitened pebbles and shells.

**May Your Pen Grace The Page – Luka Lesson**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fCU7C-5vR8A>

May your pen grace the page

at the same pace as your brain

May your grey matter
From now on
No longer be grey
May you mean every word that you say
And may writing your lines
Be the way that you pray

Get up
Step up
Never let up
Get your setup
Set up
Get recording
Get stories pouring
Ignoring your calling and calling you ‘boring’
Is boring
You need to be touring
What are you doing - you’re basically stewing
No space for day dreaming
No place for that feeling
No place for pacing the building or facing the ceiling
There’s no way that it is dealing
Your brain it is stealing
And there will be no change to you
And there’ll never be any change to that ceiling

I’m basically feeling that art isn’t hard
What's hard is your heart
And it starts in the past, but the past’s in the past
So love who you are
Pass a rush of blood till your arteries blast
And let the blood rush to your arm and let your artistry start

May your pen express upon the page every feeling you’re in
May your white page – Yang
Love your black pen – Yin

May the ball in your ball point roll ‘cause that’s the point of the ball
And if we can’t make our points then what’s the point of it all?

May the lead in your lead-pencil lead you astray
We spell it L-E-A-D ‘cause we’ve made leaders this way

And I know it’s hard but easy to say
But I mean what I say
When I say: “Mean what you say”

Potentially my pencil be the deftest thing you’ve ever seen
Adept at expressing everything that you’ve never seen
Especially when you question me
My pencil, man, she gets to me
She comes to me and comforts me and takes me out to lunch
You see
We have a cup of coffee
Before I know it she’s on top of me
She rocking and she’s rolling me
We’re touching uncontrollably
She likes to switch the roles on me
I'm writing with her
But she is writing with me
It's my life as I desire to be
It’s only right that she’s my wife 2B

She takes me to her bed of white
We try it in the dead of night
Pages till we get it right
We make love between those sheets

May your pen grace the page at the same pace as your brain
May your grey matter
From now on
No longer be grey
May you mean every word that you say
And may writing your lines be the way that you pray