**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