

# THE SCOFIELD



CYRIL WONG

## Three Poems

### The Poem

The poem begins in this living room, where half a man is writing the poem that has never been his to write. His father has floated out of the flat, a bored pillar of cloud rising into sky. If the poet rises out of this life, he carries the poems of other poets away with him, meaning the others will lose part of a heart, even an eye. The first line about the living room was a mistake. The poem had already started way before. No one knows—not even the poet—how it might end, except that it will, with or without a word about endings. For now, at least, the poet is at the helm. The poem likes to let him think so. And when he writes: the poet is lonely and weary of love, he will believe these feelings are true and his life will be a poem about loss. But, occasionally, the air will whisper of itself, speak of the possibilities of any given moment. The poet may or may not listen to the present, and suffer from the past, live only in the future. Now as the poet writes about the poet who has to get ready for school, something holds him at the table where this is now written, a word about loss

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after which he can never stop writing.  
Even as he would rather stop, while  
the very poem goes on writing itself  
beyond the false horizon of the final line,  
this poem that is everything, and all there is.

### Why I Sing

At the end of an open road  
of a teacher's instruction, I began

to achieve some perspective, able  
to pull every possible breath

to the centre of my body, gathering  
of strength before that sustained

blow of a note punched free  
from between my eyes, angling

a clean path through the air,  
as if air was all

the world was made of, or, at least,  
the treacherous fog of its concept.

And vision rises out to meet it,  
stepping forward into what I dare

call enlightenment—respite,  
more like, even mercy—

and those with ears that run all  
the way into the emptied

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core of them would creep out too  
and join me up that track

through air, wide as the crack  
loss draws across the back

of a mind, each word in a song  
taking us so far from what we are

we find ourselves again,  
become lighter than air.

### Dear Poem

I haven't written you in a long time.  
A sudden window winks open.  
The sky has my father's  
beaten face. I missed you. I missed how  
you comforted me the way you  
comfort me now with your wide-eyed  
lucidity, the languor of the patient  
unfurling of yourself, luxuriously  
disregarding the latest betrayal  
like a headline stark across the front  
page of my face. But I will not  
write about it here, along the margin  
of your insides, although you are in love  
with such unsung facts—the pearly whitehead  
on my chin, that faint odour from my feet  
scaling the air's ladder into the previous line—  
and why not? Who cares if someone else  
would never believe that such things  
may not also be poetic?  
But now I want only to talk of you.

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How many like you have I already  
composed with such authentic chords  
of truth, loud and clear within them.  
My beloved one-night-stand  
who never stops coming  
to love me at all the right times:  
after unbearable grief  
or after every rare moment  
of contentment, even joy.  
You who never lie except when I  
want you to, if only to augment a distant  
but more vital truth. I love you,  
dear poem. I love you  
because you hold pain up upon  
the quiet of your palm, raising it  
so I might see it in the best possible light.