

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Ma Jian: “Surrender”

Alexis Rhone Fancher · Wednesday, January 8th, 2020

Surrender

Translated by Julie O. from Chinese into English

Surrender, cockroaches!
When facing the brutal policemen
Cast your gas masks
Kneel down as undead insects
Raise your claws still dripping gasoline
So that the wrongdoers can relish their work
For even if teargas canisters didn't destroy your lungs
You have to learn to inhale freedom through a newly imposed tongue.

Surrender, young women!
If you don't want your black hair to turn a poison blue
If you don't want to become an anonymous body stripped naked drifting on sea
Please raise your puny hands
So that the armed policeman can hurt you with fatherly authority
And tear off the mask your mother put on your face
When she returned home in a rainy night
To expose your real self before you can offer your youth to submission.

Surrender, wasted generation!
Forget about your passion
Raise your fearless arms
Put down your bows and petrol bombs
So that you can be let into the Legislative Building
So that you can eat your favorite steamed pork dish at your favorite restaurant
So that you can hold your delayed wedding on a river cruise in Saigon
Or just so that you can seek love
Please queue up in line to capitulate.

Surrender, asylum seekers!
Even if you have chosen to become patriots

But in the name of the candles and yellow umbrellas kept carefully behind your door
 In the name of your daughter at the middle school
 In the name of the diving mask you put next to the tombstone honoring her death
 Surrender, for the XL prisoner's wear is waiting for you!

Surrender, teachers!
 The classrooms and libraries are empty as are the minds
 Untold students are jailed inside Warcraft
 See the newspapers owned by the bloodstained red flag
 Check the dazzling jewelry shop from the bookstore on the 1st floor
 The city is seized by silence
 Our brave companions are behind bars
 What are you still waiting for?
 Go make the cells packed so tight that lawbreakers are spooning
 Even if Jesus is tasting dioxin in his throat.

Surrender, freedom!
 Once upon a time you were born out of a belief
 Now your soul gobbles up the Lennon Wall
 For you so many children have plunged to their death pursuing your call
 But tonight when celebrities stroll down the red carpet
 When writers and poets debate *couleur locale*
 When art loving aunties visit the grand venues
 They have kicked you into the sewers of Wanchai
 Because this is a place
 Where Satan empty his sick stomach.

Surrender, gangster policemen!
 The Red Patriots will salute you while singing the national anthem
 You were already dead on your mother's wedding night
 But now please take off your uniform and hand it over to the butcher
 Then you can be rewarded China Dream broth prepared with an ancient recipe
 For the cockroaches have bestowed you the trophy of the Extradition Bill with their unbending claws.

–11 November 2019, London

Ma Jian is a novelist from Hong Kong. His published works include *Beijing Coma*, *China Dream*. He currently lives in London.

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