HEAVEN’S POST OFFICE (HANŬL UCH’EGUK):
METHODOLOGY, ANALYSIS, AND TRANSLATION

by

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B.A., The University of British Columbia, 2016

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE AND POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES

(Asian Studies)

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
(Vancouver)

September 2018

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The following individuals certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies for acceptance, a thesis/dissertation entitled:

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Abstract

Written as a commemorative and reflective text, Kim Subok’s *Heaven’s Post Office* (*Hanŭl uch ‘eguk*, 2015) blends personal and public histories to reconcile the self, find closure for personal and public loss, and search for sources of trauma. As this collection spans his forty years as a poet, the themes used throughout his body of work are recalled: themes of historical loss awaken latent feelings of trauma while other themes that explore the transcendental quality of nature and existential questioning are also revisited, but their re-visititation is largely reflective. Rather than embarking on a new poetic examination, Kim’s collection returns to sites once travelled. To uncover how memory is engaged by the poet and to better frame the translation, I include the translation methodology and analysis of the text by way of memory studies, providing the reader with a framework that clarifies translation structures and textual meaning.

I use four paradigms from translation studies to distill the translation process in the methodology section: polysystems theory, theories of equivalence, skopos theory, and cultural translation. I include an exposition of these theories to contextualize theoretically the translation choices I have made. Additionally, for the analysis portion, drawing on previous theorization of poetry’s role in memory and subjectivity formation, I suggest that since poetry can house memory, it can be considered a *technology of memory*; as such, many poems are *memory texts* located in personal and collective memory spheres and use imagery and *memory work* to create a shared space of empathy and prosthetic memory-making. Not all poems belong to personal and collective spheres of memory and thus, not all poems create *prosthetic memories* – other poems like these are relegated to the transcendental quality of nature.

The final portion of this thesis culminates in my English translation of *Heaven’s Post Office*. These three portions act to elucidate Kim’s engagement with memory and the process of translation – especially the cultural translation that is necessarily at play. Through prosthetic memory-making, Kim extends an experiential engagement with Korea’s history and his own trauma and past, creating a third space of ethical engagement and empathetic alliance.
Lay Summary

*Heaven’s Post Office* (2015) is a collection of poetry by Kim Subok (1953-) that spans his forty-year journey as a poet. As this collection is largely commemorative in nature, many themes from his body of work are found: contradictions of modernity, poetic reflection through nature, loss of identity, historical trauma, and reconciliation. The methodology portion outlines the translation framework while the analysis portion highlights Kim’s poetic spirit by examining *Heaven’s Post Office* within the frame of memory studies. By identifying the collection as a *memory text* that uses *memory work* – the process of recalling and mining for conscious engagement – many poems are located in personal or collective memory spheres. Due to the poems’ location in these zones of memory, there is a tendency for memory to radiate outward into prosthetic memory-making, a process by which individuals can take on unlived memories through empathy-building avenues.
Preface

This thesis is original, unpublished, independent work by the author and translator, Dawn D. Kim.

The appendix includes an original translation of Heaven’s Post Office [하늘 우체국 / Hanūl uch’eguk] by Kim Subok [김수복]. With kind permission from the author, the original text in Korean is included alongside the translated text.
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Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to thank my supervising committee, Dr. Ross King, Dr. Bruce Fulton, and Dr. Thomas Hunter – I have always felt that I could accomplish anything with your support, guidance, and advice. Dr. Fulton’s invitation to the Berkeley Translation Workshop in 2015 began this journey and I am forever grateful for his encouragement and tireless belief in me. I would also like to thank Dr. King, whose wise words propelled me to overcome my own fears and disbelief about pursuing this degree.

I am grateful to Kim Subok (김수복) for entrusting me with his poetry and for giving me a poetic voice.

My sincere thanks also goes to Insun Lee, who fostered the Korean language in me and gave me the tools to speak, and Ju-Chan Fulton, whose kind words and fierce spirit gave me strength.

I would also like to thank the staff of Asian Studies, especially Jasmina Miodragovic and Shirley Wong.

With a special thanks to Yvonne Park and Dr. John Han.

And to my family – I could not have done this without your spiritual and moral support.
Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my mother, Jin Kim, and grandmother, Kang Jungwoo, whose palpable poetic spirit guided me through my translation. And to J.G.H., for your inspiration and guidance.
Part 1 – Methodology

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Translation Studies Introduction

Translation studies seeks to bridge theory and practice by examining the area of “stylistics, literary history, linguistics, semiotics and aesthetics” (Bassnett, 2002, p. 17). As a field it has sought to carve out a space that is “distinct from literary studies, and distinct also from linguistics” (Bassnett, 1998, p. 73). For the purposes of this examination of Kim Subok’s 2015 poetry collection *Heaven’s Post Office* (*Hanŭl uch’eguk*; hereafter *HPO*), I propose to apply several translation theories to my translation of the source text. In doing so it is useful to distinguish between the practice of translation and the study of translation. Translation involves the “the processes involved in [the] transfer” of texts from language to language, as well as the training of translators in the practice of translation. Translation Studies involves the “study of textual transfer both diachronically and synchronically”; in other words, the scholar examines the “what, how, when and why of translation” (Bassnett, 1998, p. 73).

Translation studies also grapples with issues such as perceived untranslatability, the identification of different modes of equivalence (natural and directional equivalence), and the possible impact (or lack thereof) that a translation can have upon a cultural system (as in Even-Zohar’s polysystems theory). A significant component of translation studies involves describing the translation process itself rather than providing functionally based strategies – one could say that scholars employing these descriptive paradigms study the different
translation shifts in the target text, while scholars of functionally based theories such as skopos theory focus on the how-to of translation.

1.2 Translation Studies and Heaven’s Post Office

Translation studies frequently builds its research questions around binaries, and yet the origins of this field “reveal a clear desire to see theory and practice as indissoluble” (Bassnett, 2002, p. 2). Although there is a gap between theory and practice, I have used translation theory in the translation of HPO as a tool make more informed translation choices as well as to understand the larger social and cultural context of translating a text from a peripheral language to a central language. I have attempted a multi-strand approach to the translation of Heaven’s Post Office: by layering translation theories such as skopos theory, a functionalist approach that addresses the “how” of translation, as well as theories about where the source and target texts stand within different cultural systems (polysystems theory), one can self-reflexively acknowledge the asymmetrical relations of power that operate in the translation process, especially in matters of directional equivalence. Homi Bhaba’s concept of resistance in the translation process, an idea that originates in Walter Benjamin’s notion of the “afterlife” of a translation, adds another layer to the translation process.

In sum, I identify four key paradigms within translation studies that play a role in my translation of Kim’s poetry: skopos theory, polysystems theory, directional equivalence, and cultural translation theory. To elaborate how these theories influenced the translation process, I offer a brief survey of each and consider its application to, and effect on the translated product. But instead of taking a chronological approach to outlining the different
theories in translation studies, I attempt to place the translation at hand as the focal point, then connect relevant aspects of the four theories. I begin with polysystems theory, which positions the translation with respect to its textual field.
Chapter 2: Polysystems Theory and *Heaven's Post Office*

2.1 Polysystems Theory Overview

Even-Zohar’s polysystems theory conceptualizes translations as having a “determining impact” (Bassnett, 2002, p. 74) upon a literary system at certain moments in time. Translations are a part of a sub-system within the larger system of culture and can facilitate a pivotal transfer of intercultural activity (Pym, 2014, p. 69). Contrary to the general belief that translations occupy only a secondary position in literary systems, Even-Zohar (1990) believes that translations could occupy either central or peripheral positions depending on the situation governing the system. For example, translated literature can maintain a central position when: 1. A literary system is young or in the process of being formed; 2. When a literary system is weak or peripheral; and 3. When the larger system is facing a crisis or a turning point, or if there are literary vacuums in the larger system (p. 47). Additionally, if the translated literature maintains a central position, translations will retain the flavor of the original, thus adhering to fidelity.

Conversely, within Even-Zohar’s (1990) paradigm, if a translation occupies the margins of a literary system, then this secondary positioning will affect the translation itself. In this situation, as the receptor culture or target culture is established enough to have well-developed traditions of literature, radical departures from the norm would not be welcome. Thus, due to its peripheral position, the source text would be translated in such a way to fit

---

1 In the Hebrew literary polysystems, there was an absence of original texts, and works translated from Russian assumed an “unmistakably central position” (Even-Zohar, 1990, p. 49). Additionally, works translated from English, German, Polish and other languages were situated in a peripheral position. The state of Hebrew’s literary systems is what prompted Even-Zohar to think further about the position that translations can occupy in the literature of a particular language.
into an already existing pattern; there is an expectation to adhere to the already established rules and norms of practice rather than experiment in form or thought. More likely than not, the translation will adjust to the receptor culture. As HPO is considered peripheral, perhaps barely within the outer margins of academia, in accordance with the norms of the larger system, the translation would have to be domesticated and adhere to the receptor culture for a more palatable rendering.

Polysystems theory offers a macro understanding of literary systems and the positioning of a translation in that system, therefore providing a different scope to how and why translations are processed. However, post-colonial translation theories would view it as limited as it ignores power structures within systems. Post-colonial scholar Tejaswini Niranjana\(^2\) asserts that translation “both shapes and takes shape ‘within the asymmetrical relations of power that operate under colonialism’” (as cited in Bassnett, 1998, p. 76).

Through “symbolic domination,”\(^3\) translation produces representations of the colonized in such a way to “justify colonial domination” (Baer, 2014, p. 234); therefore, to further Even-Zohar’s analysis of translation within a cultural system, translation theories influenced by post-colonial theoretical thought would posit that translation can also be a conduit for intercultural relations of inequality.

\(^{2}\) Taking examples from colonial India, Niranjana argues that during processes of epistemic change, translation functioned in a major way – to form “new subjectivities and desires” (Baer, 2014, p. 234).

\(^{3}\) Bourdieu uses the term “symbolic domination” to conceptualize the production and reproduction of power relations and the legitimization of worthiness or prestige. It is “the violence which is exercised upon a social agent with his or her complicity” (
2.2 Polysystems Theory and the Sociology of Translation

In addition to post-colonial’s critical take of polysystems theory, Liu (2012) underscores another critical fact: polysystems theory describes the “workings of the system in broad-brush, abstract terms, but does not explain, for instance, how… norms come to be elaborated and propagated” (p. 1168). Thus, the translator’s social positioning is crucial to the “process and products of the translation activity” (p. 1168). Adding further clarity to polysystems theory, under the sociology of translation, the integration of Bourdieu’s field theory and habitus into polysystems theory expands the boundaries to include the “individual agents, groups, and institutions that compete for symbolic capital” (Sapiro, 2014, p. 84). The application of Bourdieu’s habitus underscores the importance of the social characteristics of agents in the field of translation as they will influence their practice of translation:

“these agents’ beliefs and practices, as well as their strategies, are informed, first, by their habitus, i.e. their cultural and ethical disposition and the kind of resources they possess (economic, cultural, and social capital) according to their family background, education, and social trajectory, and secondary, by the position they occupy in the field according to their specific capital…” (Sapiro, 2014, p. 84).

Thus, equivalence in HPO can be better illustrated within this frame – academics translating scholarly works are “much keener to avoid betraying the original work and to contextualize it with regard to the source culture than are professional translators of

---

4 Liu (2012) describes Bourdieu’s concept of field as a setting or social space in which agents and their social positions are located. An individual’s position in this field is determined by their habitus and capital (social, economic, and cultural); and is governed by specific rules of the field (doxa). As Liu notes: “fields are sites of tension, competition, confrontation, struggle of various forces, individual and institutional – a struggle over the definition of field itself and what constitutes legitimate or valued behaviour within it…” (p. 1170).

5 The habitus can be understood as structures of the mind that have internalized external reality, and in turn, these structures shape one’s practices and perceptions. These structures are characterized by a “set of acquired schemata, sensibilities, dispositions and tastes.” Bourdieu argues that certain practices are socialized into a habitus through one’s position in the social space (Liu, 2012, p. 1169).
mysteries or of children’s literature…” (p. 91). Although beginning with Even-Zohar’s polysystems theory, by integrating ideas found in post-colonial theory and the sociology of translation, a more distilled understanding of literary systems has been outlined. The use of translation strategies is not just affected by the polysystems and the position of the translation; the agent’s socialization embodied in the habitus and his or her social characteristics and position in his or her field will also affect the type of translation methodology selected. Therefore, it is not simply a matter of selecting an equivalence pattern, i.e. a domesticated or foreignized translation strategy. In the next section, I examine issues of equivalence and their application to HPO.
Chapter 3: Theories of Equivalence – Natural and Directional

3.1 Natural Equivalence

This issue of “foreign” vs. “domesticated” or “visible” vs. “invisible” brings the issue of equivalence to the forefront: with a source text that is considered ‘minor’ in the target culture, should the translator use a domesticating approach? Having already situated the target text in the margins of its cultural and literary systems, should the target text be translated so that it reads more “fluently” in English? Or, as the audience will primarily access the translation through academic venues such as literary journals and magazines, should the target text be foreignized to showcase the cultural aspects of the text? Anthony Pym (2014) divides the issue of equivalence into two theoretic veins: natural and directional.

These two sub-paradigms of equivalence are delineated according to how each sub-paradigm approaches equivalence. Natural equivalence approaches assume that translations possess the same value as their source text; they do not imply that the whole of the target text (translation) has the exact same value as the whole of the source text in terms of form, reference, or function. Instead they identify which components of the source text (such as form or the effect on the user in the target/source text) have been “selected” and given equal value in the target text (Pym, 2014). The translator looks for an equivalent that exists in the target language or culture; the assumption here is that equivalence exists prior to the

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Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834) belonged to a German group of romanticist translators. Influenced largely by the political and intellectual ideas of the time, he viewed translation as a “vehicle of national aesthetic education” that could engage the reader in a “communal process of becoming more open to other cultures.” Schleiermacher dismissed interpreting and paraphrasing, and instead valorized modes of translation that would preserve the foreignness of the text. In his 1813 lecture, he concluded that the only viable mode of foreignness was when certain marks of “foreignness” of the start text were preserved, even in details that “might strike target-language readers as unfamiliar (including word choice and syntax)” (Bemofsky, 1997, p. 177).
translation process – such equivalences are discovered, not created, by the translator. In this way, “equal value” assumes that different languages incorporate values that offer comparison in “itemized” ways. (Pym, 2014, p. 20). Thus, it follows that natural equivalence theories identify different levels of equivalence, rather than providing a framework within which the translator can work.

The sub-paradigm of natural equivalence has given rise to theories and practices that analyze the equivalents in texts. From the field of comparative stylistics, Jean-Paul Vinay and Jean Darbelnet distilled seven “procedures” or “solutions” that could be used to describe ways of equivalence (Vinay & Darbelnet, 2002). Although such theories under the natural equivalence sub-paradigm are criticized [as below, with Snell] for their “conservative prescriptions” about language use in translation, their methodological descriptions possess great pedagogical value for translators (Vinay & Darbelnet, p. 70). Theories of natural equivalence analyze translations and languages as “battling within the paradigm of structuralist linguistics” (Pym, 2007, p. 284). Mary Snell Hornby, who states that they “present an illusion of symmetry between languages which hardly exists beyond the level of vague approximations and which distorts the basic problems of translation” (Pym, 2007, p. 284). The search for equivalence involves “no real consideration of translators having different aims,” and “not much analysis is placed on the limits of translation” (Pym, 2014, p.

Vinay and Darbelnet’s seven descriptions of translation methods/solutions are arranged from most literal to most creative. The closer the translator moves towards re-creation, the more options become available to the translator, increasing the level of difficulty for the translator: 1. Borrowing (Loan words: Bon voyage); 2. Calque (borrowing an expression from another language but then translating each of its components literally: English-French Compliments of the Season! → Compléments de la saison!); 3. Literal; 4. Transposition (switching of grammatical categories: Défense de fumer → No smoking); 5. Modulation (a variation of the form of the message via a change in the point of view: turning a negative source language expression into a positive target) language expression: It is not difficult to show... → Il est facile de démontrer...); 6. Equivalence; 7. Adaptation (Vinay and Darbelnet, Translation Studies Reader, p. 92).
Although Vinay and Darbelnet’s seven positions of translation provide a general visualization of the possibilities and turns that could be taken with a translated text, it does not provide concrete theoretical or methodological strategies for my translation project. Rather, natural equivalence theories were useful after the initial and second renderings of the source text – mainly to analyze the equivalence in the text and weigh alternatives in equivalence. Theories in directional equivalence, however, offer greater insights into how to think about translation.

### 3.2 Directional Equivalence

Theories of directional equivalence begin on the same page as their “natural” counterparts in the sense that the outcome of the two approaches results in equivalence, but place primacy on the choices of the translator and the directionality of the translation. Unlike in natural equivalence, the source text offers the translator a whole range of possibilities; thus, there is an element of unpredictability. According to Pym (2014) the underlying idea is that translators actively create equivalence rather than finding it prior to translation. Unlike in natural equivalence theories, where there is more of an analysis of the target text, directional equivalence theories are marked by a central position – one that is usually expressed in some version of the free versus literal polarity. Thus, in this sub-

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8 Pym (2014) notes that directionality is not reciprocal in directional equivalence theories in the sense that the translator may move from the source language to the target language, but not necessarily return to the target language (A → B, but B cannot return to A). Pym (2014) provides the example: to translate “Eton” may require a translator to use the phrase, “English elite school” in the target language, but it cannot be back-translated; “English elite school” would not be translated as “Eton.” Thus, directionality is important in these theories and equivalence is not assumed to exist prior to translation. Although Pym (2014) distinguishes the importance of directionality in distinguishing natural and directional equivalence theories, the delineation does not rely solely on directionality. The more crucial distinction between these two sub-paradigms is the function of the theory – natural equivalence analyses the translated text and outcomes, while directional equivalence provides the translator with translation strategies.
paradigm of equivalence, theories are dichotomous. As theorist and translator Lawrence
Venuti (2002) describes the opposition: “translat[ions] that cultivat[e] pragmatic equivalence,
immediately intelligible to the receptor” versus “translat[ions] that [are] formally equivalent,
designed to approximate the linguistic and cultural features of the foreign text” (p. 121).
Theories included in this sub-paradigm are: Schleiermacher’s “domesticating” versus
“foreignization,” Eugene Nida’s “formal equivalence” versus “dynamic equivalence,”
Juliane House’s “covert” and “overt,” and Venuti’s “fluent” versus “resistant.”

Venuti’s “fluent” (domesticating) and “resistant” (foreignizing) terminologies are
categorized under directional equivalence by Pym (2014) as there is a dichotomy; however,
Venuti’s position on the “invisibility of the translator” is a dynamic multi-theoretical
observation. Thus, it should be noted that Venuti’s criticism of the asymmetrical cultural
exchanges between “hegemonic English-language nations” and their “others” cuts across

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9 Eugene Nida’s “formal equivalence,” which follows the text closely, and “dynamic equivalence,” a “free
rendering that aims to reproduce the effect of the source text on the target-language reader” (Massardier-Kenney, 2017, p. 35). Nida advocated for a dynamic or free rendering of the Bible rather than a formal
rendering.

10 Overt translation strategies preserve the source culture or a source culture’s features in the target texts
(House, 1997, p. 66). Rather than use references in the target culture to explain source culture in the translation,
further elucidation is provided in the context of the source culture. Translators strive to preserve the original
features for the readers (House, 1997, p. 145). Examples: overt historically linked source texts that are tied to a
specific event (political speeches, sermons); overt timeless source texts that contain distinct historical meaning
and culture-specificity (House, 1997, p. 66–67). By contrast, covert translation strategies use the target culture’s
own understanding and frames of reference to elucidate source culture.

translated text…is judged acceptable by most publishers, reviewers, and readers when it reads fluently, when
the absence of any linguistics of stylistic peculiarities makes it seem transparent, giving the appearance that it
reflects the foreign writer’s personality or intention or the essential meaning of the foreign text” (p. 1). In this
literary polysystem, translations are considered acceptable “only if the translator remains invisible” in the target
text, which produces an illusory effect – it gives the reader the impression that the translations were originally
written in the target language. Venuti contests this translation trend and grants primacy to “invisible”
translations by adopting a more “foreignizing” strategy. Venuti (2004) notes that a translation should never read
as if it were an original, rather it should bear the visible signs of it being translated: “Fluency masks a
domestication of the foreign text that is appropriative and potentially imperialistic … It can be countered by a
foreignizing translation that registers the irreducible differences of the foreign text” (p. 341).
with theories in the sociology of translation and translation studies. However, it remains a theory of equivalence because Venuti is concerned with the effect of “naturalness” (fluency) in translations: “a fluent strategy aims to efface the translator’s crucial intervention in the foreign text” and “effaces the linguistic and cultural differences of the foreign text” (Venuti, 1992, p. 5). It should be noted that theorists who identify methodologies of translation under the directional equivalence paradigm do not suggest that there can only be two ways to translate – they allow for a spectrum between the two poles. That equivalence can allow for variability is perhaps the key point from which I drew most inspiration in tackling my translation of HPO. Other approaches to translation are located in this directional equivalence pole of the spectrum – and the concept of the “invariant core” further informed the final product of my translation.

12 The sociology of translation is also known as actor-network theory: theorists explain the networks that are formed between social agents (authors, translators, editors, critics, literary agents, and government officials) and institutions (translation schools, literary journals, publishing houses, professional associations) (Sapiro, 2014, p. 82). For example, the sociology of translation would study translators and interpreters as an occupational group, analyzing the translators’ “social backgrounds, their struggles for professional status, their professional identity and self-image as translators” (Sapiro, 2014, p. 83).

13 Due to the political, cultural, and social context underlying Schleiermacher’s “foreignizing” method, it is important to draw a distinction between Schleiermacher’s use of the term versus Venuti’s use of “foreignizing.” Venuti (1992) uses the term in the context of the publishing world’s tendency to “efface” the translator. Venuti (1992) criticizes a fluent strategy as performing a “labor of acculturation which domesticates the foreign text” thereby “enacting an imperialism that extends the dominion of transparency with other ideological discourses over a different culture” (p. 5). Schleiermacher valorized “foreignization” as a method to open cultural learning and language-learning in Germany, thus, integral to edifying German culture and literature.
3.3 Directional Equivalence: The Invariant Core and “The River at Evening”

Adding another layer of complexity to directional equivalence is the concept of the invariant core of the original poem or text. According to Popović, the invariant core is “represented by stable, basic and constant semantic elements in the text, whose existence can be proved by experimental semantic condensation” (Bassnett, 2002, p. 35). Thus, variants represent changes in translation to the source text that do “not modify the core of meaning but influence the expressive form” (Bassnett, 2002, p. 35). Put more clearly, the principle is that the invariant is not the spirit of the text – it is the common component where there are multiple translations of the source text. For example, components rendered in common in the multiple translations of a Baudelaire poem would constitute the poem’s invariant core.

Rather than a matter of finding differences or searching for perceived sameness, equivalence should be viewed dialectically among multiple signs and structures in and around the source text (Bassnett, 2002).

Applying Popović’s idea of the invariant core to the translation of “River at Evening” (“저녁의 강”/ “Chŏnyŏk ŭi Kang”), I found that the form, voice, mood, and rhythm (and repetition) of this poem were integral to its core. The translated poem had to convey the diction and familiarity of voice located in the speaker – the poet’s grandmother. Conveying this core while relying on directional equivalence remained my priority. Perhaps inevitably, in the process, some elements were “lost,” but my final rendering is built around what constitutes the poem’s core: a familiar, plaintive tone in conjunction with an undertone of longing:

...
저녁의 강
Chŏnyŏk ŭi Kang

할머니는 저 긴 울음을
címatexe da danji mmot hago
네가, 네가
내 죽거들랑
명주단으로 감싸 안아달라고 했다
그 강둑길 따라가다가
저녁 물결을 타고 날으는
쇠기러기처럼 날아가셨겠지

Listen, my dear,
my grandmother said, weeping long pleats of tears more than her skirt could hold
When I’m no more, bury me in silk cloth.
She must have followed the riverbank, like a speckled belly goose riding the evening ripples and flown away

Interlinear Translation and Romanization

할머니는 저 긴 울음을
Grandmother that long weeping
halmöni núň chŏ kim urŭm ŭl

치마폭에 다 담지 못하고
skirt width (in) all collect not and
ch’imap’og e ta tamchi mot hago

네가, 네가
I , I
ne ka, ne ka

내 죽거들랑
I die
nae chukkŏdŭllang

명주단으로 감싸 안아 달라고 했다
silk with wrap up embrace she asked
myŏngjudun ŭro kamssa ana tallago haetta
From this brief overview of equivalence, and by understanding faithfulness as more than simply a concept juxtaposed with the notion of “taking liberties,” we can extend the translation process beyond the margins and binaries found in equivalence theories and in translation studies as a whole. There are many theories and strategies found in the equivalence paradigm; dividing the paradigm into two sub-paradigms—natural and directional equivalence—allows us to easily recognize and categorize theories. There are “procedures” or “solutions” (i.e. Vinay & Darbelnet) that are used to describe ways of equivalence; these natural equivalent procedures are used mainly when analyzing equivalence of a translated text. During the translation process the natural equivalence sub-paradigm was implemented between edits while analyzing the source and target texts. Directional equivalence includes those theories marked by a definitive position on the free versus literal polarity. As these theories offer a more active engagement with the source text, many translation choices landed within this sub-paradigm. Of particular note, the invariant core provided strategies that were more flexible, however, as the concept tethers the target text to common elements intrinsic to the source text, the rendering seemed to maintain the
flavour of the original. With all the variations of equivalence in mind, *HPO* was not located squarely in one quadrant of equivalence – each poem recalled different levels of equivalence.

In translating *HPO* I began to understand where the source text was situated in the target culture (polysystems theory/habitus). But rather than subscribe to a strict binary approach to translation—either foreignizing or domesticating—I adopted a more fluid understanding of directional equivalence in light of other cultural theories in translation studies – in addition to recognizing the skopos, or the intent, of the source and target texts. As Bassnett notes, “texts which appear to be least ‘translatable’ in terms of the linguistic problems they pose for readers are actually the most translatable, because the translator will have to explicitly play with the text” (2002, p. 80). Thus, while it is important to acknowledge the concepts of equivalence, we must employ additional elements and theories of translation if we are to move beyond binaries and weave meaning, language, culture, and purpose into the rich tapestry of which literary translation is capable.
Chapter 4: Skopos Theory

4.1 Skopos Theory Overview

A major shift in translation theory came in the form of skopos theory (Katharina Reiss and Hans Vermeer, 1971). Unlike equivalence theories, skopos theory does not dictate how a text should be translated: rather, the function of the text is integral to the outcome of the translation:

“the Skopos rule thus reads as follows: translate/interpret/speak/write in a way that enables your text/translation to function in the situation in which it is used and with the people who want to use it and precisely in the way they want it to function” (Vermeer as quoted in Pym, 2014, p. 45).

The purpose of the translation will be related to the type of text: “expressive,” “appellative,” or “representational.” “Expressive” texts include personal letters and many literary genres, while “appellative” or “appeal-focused” are publicity texts (Pym, 2014). This functionalist approach to translation has met with criticism. For example, the function of a text may not be clear cut – the text may be “characterized by a hybridity or complexity that prevents its potential effects in the source culture from being easily formulated…” (Venuti & Colina, 2017, p. 209). In attempting narrow down and clarify the intentions of the source text, functionalists may tend to oversimplify and thus overlook other theoretical approaches that may render the translation process more complex, such as cultural or sociological concepts (Venuti & Colina). Functionalist approaches have thus been predominantly relegated to the translation of pragmatic texts. Additionally, criticisms have been directed at the ineffectiveness of the theory’s application on literary texts (expressive texts) since the texts involve highly expressive language (Trisnawati, 2014). Despite its limitations, the skopos of the source text plays an important role in the overall translation process.
4.2 Skopos of Heaven’s Post Office

In the case of this translation project, the skopos of *HPO* became an anchor point during the translation process. The basic tenet of skopos theory involves identifying the type of text, and *HPO* is an expressive text. Additionally, to properly apply the skopos to a translation, a translation brief is a necessary requirement as it serves as a guide for translators while also determining the translation strategies and methods to be implemented (Trisnawati, 2014). Skopos theory allows for the translator to exercise a range of creativity as there are no restrictions for the type of translation strategies implemented (Trisnawati, 2014). For the translation of *HPO*, a formal translation brief was not provided, however, through direct access to the poet, the translation’s skopos was made clear: to translate the Korean text into English that expresses the main theme and author’s original intent.

*HPO* was written to commemorate the poet’s forty-year journey with poetry, which began as he entered his post-secondary studies. In a personal conversation with the translator, the poet explained that this collection was about “giving back” to the soul and world of poetry – a mode of expression that “gave [him] sustenance” (personal communication, January 21, 2016); in it he seeks to convey the deep impression that poetry has made upon his life. It is an intensely personal look into accounts of personal trauma, accounts of Korean national trauma, and different memoryscapes. The poems contain personal anecdotes as well as allusions to national trauma overlain with personal trauma and national history. Embedded in this collection, which traverses Korean history by way of the poet’s life, is an implicit “I” perspective as well as a national “Our/We” point-of-view. Thus, in keeping the author’s intent in mind it becomes crucial for the translator to select the perspective or tone that best convey the spirit and core of the poem. For example, in deeply
personal poems, there are times when the poem shifts to a collective perspective. Steering this transition from personal to collective memory spheres relied on returning to the skopos and anchoring the translation so that it carried the author’s intent. In my analysis of HPO, which follows this methodology of translation analysis, there are several examples of these personal-to-collective memory shifts.

Conveying authorial intent in the target text raises several questions. Is it possible to fluidly transmute the original intent into the target culture? It is a formidable task, on that certain theorists propose could be “violent” and even impossible. However, the key may rest in remaining acutely aware of all the concessions made during the translation process, and in framing the translation consistently within a structure that can best convey the intentions of the author along with the form, core, and spirit of the poem. Thus, for the translation of HPO, the translation was understood within memory studies, and strove to effectively relay the different spheres of memory to the reader, a point that I treat further in the analysis section of HPO. However, before moving towards theories of indeterminacy and culture, it is necessary to first illustrate the other pole of the equivalence spectrum.
Chapter 5: Indeterminacy and the Cultural Turn

5.1 Indeterminacy and Pure Language Overview

Octavio Paz notes that absolute equivalence in translation “implies a transformation of the original … [t]he original text never reappears in the new language (this would be impossible)” (Bassnett, 1998, p. 78). Paz has also sought to present translators are creative artists as he sees the “task of the translator as an act of liberation, for the translator’s task is ‘freeing the [linguistic] signs into circulation, then returning them to language’” (Bassnett, 2014, p. 58). To further complicate this act of transformation is the element of uncertainty or indeterminacy as famously described in Walter Benjamin’s notion of translation involving the “afterlife” of a work—translations can extend the life of the original. For Benjamin, translation brings forth a “pure language” and that translations themselves are untranslatable, “not because of any inherent difficulty, but because of the looseness with which meaning attaches to [translations]” (Benjamin, 2014, p. 23). In other words, Benjamin “effectively turns the indeterminacy of translation from a problem into a virtue” (Pym, 2014, p. 95).

Largely considered a foundational text for translators, Benjamin’s “The Task of the Translator” does not refer to an “original text,” but instead “scrapped the idea of the original and therefore the whole binary of traditional translation theory” (Buden et al., 2009, p. 200). Buden et al. (2009) paraphrases the main point of Benjamin’s essay as follows:

“He illustrates the relation between ‘original’ and translation using the metaphor of a tangent: translation is like a tangent which touches the circle (i.e., the original) at one single point only, thereafter to follow its own way.” (p. 200)

They then suggest that the “vehement questioning of the very idea of an essential origin made Benjamin’s essay so important for deconstructionist theory” (Buden et al., 2009, p. 200). However, it is hard to pin down Benjamin’s notion of “pure language” in concrete,
functional terms; it is his deconstructionist understanding of translation and language that ushered in new ways of thinking about translation, such as the cultural translation paradigm. Addressing cultural complexity in the translation process, Homi Bhabha’s ruminations on Benjamin’s concepts factored in a more integral form in the active translation process of *HPO*.

### 5.2 Cultural Translation and Cultural Complexity in “In June”

With the knowledge that there is a notion of untranslatability within the translation process, during my translation of *Heaven’s Post Office*, this untranslatable quality became a “point of resistance,” as posited by Bhabha. Bhabha’s theory of cultural translation does not provide prescriptions or solutions for the translation process; it is a paradigm that focuses on “cultural processes rather than products” (Pym, 2014, p. 138). Cultural translation is concerned with how a cultural form moves from one context to another; additionally, within this movement, there is an agent or subject responsible for this movement (Birmingham Centre for Media and Cultural Research, n.d.). Bhabha identifies a “third space” of cultural negotiation; “a space for hybridity … subversion, transgression, blasphemy, heresy …” (Buden et al, 2009, p. 201). In his concern with the element of untranslatability (based upon Benjamin’s claim that “translations are themselves untranslatable” in Venuti, 2004) he focuses upon the idea that translations are a “point of resistance, a negation of complete integration, and a will to survive [is] found in the subjectivity of the migrant” (Pym, 2014, p. 140). Rather than strategies of translation, translators informed under this paradigm will be thinking about processes of cultural translation—how can the translator, without direct access __________________
to the experiences and histories of the author or source text, speak to and about the “other”? Thus, the subject position of the translator must be acknowledged in the translation process – the source text will be filtered through the translator’s experiences, knowledge, ethnicity, etc. In Bhabha’s position, hybridity, double-meanings, and resistance in the translated text celebrate the subjectivity of the other.

This “resistance” is further understood by Venuti within the context of cultural and political imperialism in which “translations … exercise discursive power over ‘Third World’ subjects by representing them in ways that cater to the expectations of the target audience” (Baker, 2014, p. 16). Given the complexities with which translation has been historically used to generate certain representations based upon asymmetric power relations, Mona Baker (2014) notes that there has been a shift in perspective in translation studies, a perspective that acknowledges that “at times the translator functions as ‘an agent for subaltern resistance, instead of an extension of the long arm of the oppressor’” (p. 17). The hegemony of English, which further elucidates the minority-majority relations between languages and cultures, cannot be ignored.

According to Bhabha, there is a hybridity in cultural translation that affords the translator a chance to “cut across binarisms” (Pym, 2014, p. 140). In translating *HPO*, rather than take a defined approach or position in terms of strategy, I took a step back from the foreignizing or domesticating binaries and began to view the translation as a culturally hybrid space. Thinking of translation as a hybrid space allowed for more word play and the creation of multiple meanings that did not stray too far from the poet’s intent. To better illustrate the approach of the limitations of relying simply on directional equivalence and to show how the
cultural component plays a considerable role, I turn to the translation of “In June” [“6 월에”/

“6 월에”]

6 월에

염천 하늘에 비가 뿌렸다

방속 지렁이들 너무나 기뻐서

식솔들 이끌고 소풍 나왔다가

운통 배가 터져버린

공동묘지들

In June

Rain sprinkled down from the sweating sky

The earthworms, overjoyed
came out for a picnic with their brood in tow –

Bellies bursting,
formed a cemetery of mounds

Interlinear Translation and Romanization

6 월에
6 Wŏl e

염천 하늘에 비가 뿌렸다
Hot weather sky (at) rain sprinkled

yŏmch’ŏn hanŭl e pi ka ppurỳŏtta

방속 지렁이들 너무나 기뻐서
Earth inside worms extremely joyful

ttangsok chirŏngidŭl nŏmun kippŏsŏ

식솔들 이끌고 소풍 나왔다가
families lead and picnic came out and then

siksoldŭl ikkŭlgo sop’ung nawattaga

운통 배가 터져버린
entirely stomach burst

Ont’ong pae ka t’ŏjyŏbŏrin

공동묘지들
public cemeteries

kongdong myoji tŭl

This poem was particularly tricky to translate because of the use of sinographic vocabulary in the first line:
염천 [yŏmcʰ’ŏn] can be written as either of two pairs of sinographs, 炎天 (“blistering weather”) or 塩泉 (“saline/salt spring”). As the sinographs were not specified in the poem, I initially believed that the poet was drawing on a childhood “game” in Korea in the 1950s and 1960s in which children would sprinkle salt over worms to watch them writhe, burst, and eventually die. Therefore, I thought that this first word contained a double meaning – a combination of both “blistering weather” and “salt spring.”

The first stanza of the initial draft of the translation read, “Salty rain sprinkled down from a blistering sky.” But in conversation with the poet about his use of 염천 (yŏmcʰ’ŏn/hot weather) he noted that his original intent was to convey a hot summer day. He remarked that the element of salt would convey that the sky was sweating and thoroughly enjoying this duality, he suggested that I leave “salty/sweating sky” for the final translation.

Here we see the complexity of sinographs—especially homonyms—and how they can layer onto imagery and meaning. During my final edits, I understood Bhabha’s hybridity and cultural complexity: translating over into the dominant language, I realize that my subject position as translator and second-generation Korean factored greatly into the final product. Unlike with the “salty/sweating sky” example, the following example is an example of how directional equivalence methods often clash when one attempts to render a cultural component.

The image of the “public cemetery” (공동묘지/ kongdongmyoji) in Korea is quite different from the image of a cemetery in North America. Graves may be marked with a
headstone in Korea, but instead of being buried six-feet deep, grassy mounds around two feet high identify each site. Thus, the image of worms scattered about the pavement, their bodies hunched up like cemetery mounds is particularly resonant in Korean culture, but this image is not “fluent” to North Americans. The task would seem simple; for example, one could potentially transfer these symbols into the “coded symbolic language of the target system” (Bassnett, 2002, p. 81). However, as “In June” illustrates, the task of the translator involves much more than the straight transfer or transposition of symbols because “the system underpinning the symbols” may be different (p. 81). In other words, the difference between the two conceptual systems of source and target cultures will result in operational variability that is further complicated by the different strands of conventions or thought (Bassnett 2002, pp. 79-81).

There is no cut-and-dried methodology to deciding whether to apply either a foreignizing or domesticating approach to translation. In this poem, it can be argued that a foreignizing method was implemented to convey the indeterminate meaning of 염 (yŏm/hot or saline) and to further describe for the target culture the image of the Korean public cemetery. But to call it a strictly foreignizing method would be to overshadow the cultural complexity involved. In addition, the original rendering of “salty sky” added a layer of personification to the image (a sweating sky), but this rendering would be understood only by readers who understood both languages. The choice was made to keep this rendering to convey the layered ambiguities of 염 (salty; hot). As my target audience are those in academia or bilingual Korean/English readers of literary journals I included in the final rendering the element of “salty” or “sweating.”
This translation sample reveals the complicated task of the translator when trying to negotiate these cultural differences. Taking Susan Bassnett’s prescription for dealing with cultural differences in the translation process, I situate the translated text so as to strive for awareness, as Bassnett (2002) explains:

“And it is important to recognize that the task of the translator is not to ignore cultural difference and to pretend that there is such a thing as universal truth and value free cultural exchange, but rather to be aware of those differences. Through awareness, translators may find a way of helping readers across frontiers, some of which are heavily armed and dangerous to approach. Nevertheless, the translator always, essentially, works with language.” (p. 79)

In HPO’s first and second drafts, there was more “resistance” in terms of word and image play as well as ambiguity. However, working through the third and fourth drafts, the translation shifted to adhere to a more visible or foreignized rendering. As this translation is situated in academia and part of a scholarly work, I felt it my imperative to contextualize it with regard to the source culture. However, by starting with the idea that translation is not merely a “process of reconstruction of an original” but rather a “re-creation using new materials” (Octavio Paz and Nasos Vayenas) (Bassnett, 2014, p. 58) enabled me to think about translating the text as my own poetic act. Beginning at this juncture, a more definitive poetic voice was able to come through. In the end, many of the poems followed a directional equivalent strategy, one that remained closer to conveying the source culture; however, the notion of the invariant core—identifying and selecting the common elements found in a text—became a stable strategy, one that ran throughout the entire translated text.
Chapter 6: Conclusion

As this survey has presented, there is no single theory that informs translation studies but rather, it is comprised of a network of theories that asks “fundamental questions for the theory and practice of translation” (Bermann & Porter, 2014, p. 5). Although the initial analyses in translation studies relied on theories of equivalence, over time, it was understood that it was impossible to “achieve linguistic equivalence in practice…or in theory” thus, a gap between early ideals of theoretical descriptions and the practical expectations emerged, which prompted the suggestion that translation involved “a cline of different strategies rather than an equation” (p. 3). That said, situated somewhere along this “cline” and viewing the translation of HPO through translation studies (and the sociology of translation), the translation process was not an isolated activity – a definite and more refined shape formed after being informed by such theories.

Given that HPO was not an isolated task, the translated text was also shaped heavily by the stream of communication between the author and myself. As such, the skopos took on a more meaningful position. Rather than simply situate the text by its function (expressive text), the opportunity of a close working relationship with the poet enabled the original intent and ‘function’ of the text to be conveyed. Thus, this application of the skopos was indeed unique and perhaps not afforded to other translation projects.

It is not possible to apply a certain translation theory upon a source text and hope that the linguistic transfer will achieve some kind of equivalence. Rather, translation studies and by extension, the sociology of translation, provides a general map—a deep well of strategies—that can guide and inform the translator when making decisions. Theories of equivalence, as we have seen, are not straightforward. It is simply not a matter of fidelity or
faithfulness – the translator’s position (habitus) is also integral. As for *HPO*, since it is situated in the fringe of academia, equivalence cannot be understood in the usual binary fields (domesticated vs. foreignizing) and additionally, when we factor in the “cultural turn” in translation studies, equivalence becomes a more slippery notion. Although not expanded in detail in this examination, the *sociology of translation* is another field that sheds light on the apparent blind spots found in translation studies.

This examination of the translation methodology is part of the larger analysis of the original text itself – the methodology opens the door to the analysis of *HPO*. Understanding the how and why of translation as well as acknowledging the larger social context of the translator’s position paints only a partial picture when analyzing Kim Subok’s *Heaven’s Post Office*. This methodology serves to better understand the next section, the analysis of *HPO*, and ultimately, helps to convey the translator’s intent and style of the translated text.
Part 2 – Analysis

Chapter 7: Introduction

7.1 Memory Studies Overview

The study of memory and the related practices of memorialization and commemoration have become burgeoning areas of investigation in the Humanities, especially in the light of increasing political and social unrest throughout the world. Andreas Huyssen (2000) connects the emergence of memory discourse in scholarship, as well as the practices of memorialization with the ebbing role of memory and modes of remembering in everyday life and cultural spaces, highlighting the possibility that a nation’s traumatic past will be forgotten. Huyssen (2000) also asserts that although this surge of interest in memory discourses seems to be global, such discourses are tied essentially to the identity and history of specific nations (p. 26). To distilling this idea, memory discourses can provide the individual and the collective the chance to legitimate the past, and to commemorate and adjudicate and reconcile past wrongs, thereby offering multiple cathartic sites of negotiation.

Memory studies is a multidisciplinary field that focuses on “broader dimensions of social memory and the politics of public remembering” (Bosch, 2016, p. 2). The French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs, a student of Emile Durkheim, contended that memory is a societal and collective phenomenon rather than limited to an individual experience; thus, memory is relational and exists within social frameworks (Bosch, 2016). However, defining memory is challenging because the concept of memory shifts depending on the location; when memory is situated in museums, experiential museums, photographs, or in film, there are different types of memory that are recalled and engaged (Brown et al., 2009, p. 119). Thus, due to the variety of spaces and disciplines that engage memory, several concepts of
memory have surfaced such as *historical memory, personal memory,* and *collective memory.* And with the availability of “sensuous engagement” through mass disseminations of film, Youtube videos, Instagram posts, and other media, Allison Landsberg (2009) identifies another type of memory – *prosthetic memory,* a concept that is mainly used in media and film studies that describes a phenomenon of engagement in which technologies produce un-lived memories and experiences from “mass-mediated representations” like film or an experiential museum. While personal and collective memories are not foreign concepts to most and are generally in our everyday lexicon, prosthetic memory is a lesser known concept. These types of memory will be expanded upon in a later section.

*Memory work*—the process of active remembering by which one may inquire about the past and subsequently (re)construct the present through memory (Kuhn, 2010, p. 303)—can mine levels of meaning that are not apparent on the surface, offering the opportunity to re-connect with the past to deal with latent grief and repression. Films, photographs, memorial sites, and experiential museums are media through which an individual can process trauma and perform memory work; poetry can be added to this list. Billy Collins, the former U.S. poet laureate, has called poetry the “original grief-counseling center” (Luger, 2014, p. 184). Although Collins sees poetry as being a prominently *inward* act of reflection, I second Luger’s assertion that poetry can move us both inward towards the subconscious and *outward* to the public. In that poetry produces personal, collective, and cultural memories that can record personal and historical records, it is a *technology of memory.* To unpack the layers of memory and experience within Kim Subok’s poetry, I look to memory studies, situating *HPO* as a *memory text* and examining the concepts of personal, collective, and
prosthetic memories to understand the complex intersections of meaning and imagery found in his poetry.

As poems have qualities akin to other technologies of memory, I suggest that since *HPO* is a reflective and commemorative text, many poems are in fact *memory texts* that engage the reader in memory work. Inarticulate or emergent feelings (*structures of feeling*) surface through memory work and poetic imagery, bringing the reader into multiple spheres of memory; crossing borders of memory aids in the production of prosthetic memories, or un-lived memory projection. To examine how certain poems in *HPO* engage in prosthetic memory-making three key poems are analyzed: “The Belly of the Lake” (“뱃속의 호수”/ “Paetsok ŭi hosu”), “To the Bird (“새에게”/ “Sae ege”), and “Torrents” (“격류”/ “Kyŏngnyu”). Through this analysis, we see how the memory text enhances engagement with a completely different culture – producing a kind of ethical form of engagement.

Kim Subok’s poetry enables the reader to move into personal and collective zones of memory, creating this performance of memory by which structures of feeling emerge, and in these key poems, prosthetic memories are made through three different devices, all of which can harness empathetic responses. In “The Belly of the Lake,” the use of the ritual or poetic *chesa* makes way for a “transferential space” and allows for an experiential engagement with an un-lived past; in “To the Bird,” the point-of-view device brings the reader into an experiential relationship of insight and understanding. And lastly, “Torrents” is a poetic monument, a textual record of lived experience – there is a dynamic memory performance between personal and collective memory spheres, and like “To the Bird,” the use of the point-of-view device produces prosthetic memories, allowing an emotional understanding to
the historical trauma in the poem. Before assessing these poems, I will introduce a few terms and concepts to illuminate *HPO* as a memory text and its prosthetic memory-making quality.
Chapter 8: Concepts – Technology of Memory, Memory Text, and Structures of Feeling

8.1 Poetry as a Technology of Memory

Marita Sturken, a scholar in cultural memory studies, identifies *technologies of memory*, which include “the objects, images, and representations” that house memory, produce it and give it meaning (Luger, 2014, p. 183). Moberley Luger (2014) extends Sturken’s assessment of what is considered a technology of memory and asserts that poetry has the ability to dynamically house memory, and therefore can also be understood as a technology of memory. In her study, Luger analyzes the memorial function of 9/11 poetry and posits that poetry functions as a national monument: “[poems] are active repositories that carry events of the past into the future” (p. 190). She notes that poetry serves a “range of memorial purposes” such as “articulat[ing] synchronic and diachronic relationships,”15 offering the chance to “look both backward and forward” and to “participate in documenting, remembering, and shaping a nation’s history” (p. 190). In addition, Luger (2014) notes that poetry—just like monuments—can represent “parts of a whole,” meaning that both poetry and monuments have an intrinsic figurative quality by which the individual may interpret the language or symbolism found in poetry in his or her “respective reflecting pools” (p. 190). Thus, I build from the point that poetry is a type of technology of memory akin to other discursive objects such as memorials, photographs, and Instagram posts. As Luger (2014) affirms:

“understanding poetry as a technology of memory means understanding poems as culturally and politically charged texts that mediate memory not only privately for individuals but also publicly for nations and groups” (p. 184).

15 Luger (2014) identifies synchronic and diachronic relationships as those between Americans and Afghanis or among Americans through history.
Luger’s assessment of poetry as a technology of memory plays an important role in understanding *HPO* as a memory text, especially if we examine how prosthetic memories are formed in the text.

### 8.2 Memory Text

Kuhn (2010) identifies the *memory text* as a medium that re-enacts the past through performances of memory; this text may “embody, express, work through and even unpick interconnections between the private, the public, and the personal” (p. 299). I propose that Kim’s poetry is a memory text in which *structures of feeling* emerge through performances of memory via poetic imagery and through *memory work* to weave in and out of the different arenas of memory. Before we can understand how Kim’s poetry is a type of memory text and how it achieves this memory performance, a better grasp of the concept of the memory text is in order.

Kuhn identifies several qualities of the memory text: First, time is not sequential; there is a cyclical quality in which a “single recounted memory might fuse together a series of possibly separate events.” Second, the text consists of anecdotes, snapshots, and vignettes that are not anchored to a linear time frame. Third, events in the memory text have been chosen “at random from a paradigm of memories” and presented within a non-causal narrative (Kuhn, 2010, p. 299). Thus, as Kuhn (2010) asserts, due to the abrupt scene shifts or shifts in narrative perspective, “memory texts have more in common with poetry than with classic narrative” (p. 300):

> “The metaphoric quality, the foregrounding of formal devices, the tendency to rapid shifts of setting or point of view all feed into the characteristically collagist, fragmentary, timeless, even the ‘musical,’ quality of the memory text, which by and large possesses an imagistic quality that aligns it more closely to unconscious
productions like dreams and fantasies than to, say, written stories” (Kuhn, 2014, p. 299).

Kuhn concludes that these characteristics of the memory text point to a dynamic performance, or to be specific, to a type of memory performance.

Following Kuhn’s illustration of the memory text, it becomes possible to understand how Kim’s poetry in *HPO* functions as a kind of memory text. Recalling the qualities of the memory text as outlined by Kuhn, the first characteristic is the cyclical quality of the text. The vignettes are told through several perspectives: from the point-of-view of the poet himself, through the eyes of an inanimate object, or through a collective. These vignettes seem to be fused together without regard to time, achieving a dream-like “unconscious production.” Through this timeless, musical quality Kim achieves a performance of memory – and it is indeed a performance due to its movement through the personal, collective, and prosthetic zones of memory.

### 8.3 Structures of Feeling

Conceptualized by Raymond Williams in his book *Marxism and literature* (1977) and mainly situated in literary theory, *structures of feeling* describe inarticulated feelings located in the “pre-stage of consciousness.” He uses the term *feeling* rather than *thought* or *experience* to signify that what is emerging may not be fully articulated or formed (Matthews, 2001). These emergent feelings are apparent in moments of “deadlock, obstruction and failure … or in the struggle which attends them.” (Matthews, 2001, p. 189). The “struggle” referred to here is the push and pull between the hegemonic discourses in a particular time and place, and one’s “inner dynamic.” Williams critiques Gramsci’s concept of hegemony by stating that hegemonic structures can never be total, in fact these structures
of feeling continually produce new formations of thought (Buchanan, 2010). To break down the idea into two conceptual parts, “structures” are a matter of narrative form, syntax, and diction and are found in texts and other artistic endeavours. Second, “feeling,” as previously explained, describes an internal dynamic that engages with the intangible, such as hegemonic ideologies and remains in the process of articulation (Buchanan, 2010).

Structures of feeling precisely defines the emergent feelings and thoughts that are conjured through the journey of memory taken in Kim’s poetry. His poems provide a space in which these inchoate ideas and feelings can mingle, coalesce, and provoke formed feelings.

8.4 Imagery and Memory Work in HPO

Connecting this assessment of Kim’s poetry as a memory text with Luger’s claim that poetry can function as a technology of memory, one can argue that if poems can be used as a memorial – a method to remember, document, and articulate – then it follows that Kim’s poetry, which uses multiple sites of memory (personal, collective, prosthetic), engages in a type of memory performance. This dynamic performance occurs through two poetic devices: imagery and active memory work.

The imagery evoked in Kim’s poetry has three distinct layers, each of which contributes to the overall performative aspect: (1) descriptions of the natural world; (2) descriptions of personal memory/trauma; and/or (3) historical/collective trauma. Through the interplay of these three image layers, the memory text gives way to memory work – the active remembering of and mining for latent trauma – which allows the poem to cross over into different arenas of memory. Kim’s poems will begin with an image of the natural world,
then describe a vignette from his own memory, then fall into the boundaries of personal and collective memory. And finally, memories are formed into a prosthetic memory, an inorganic type of memory that may or may not have a direct connection to a person’s lived past, but play a role in an individual’s “articulation of subjectivity” (Landsberg, 2004, p. 20). This crosscutting of memory is a performance of memory through which an interconnection of the personal and public is made possible, thus providing a site of construction and negotiation for the reader’s own experience and memory.

Before outlining the three arenas of memory in *HPO* and how Kim’s poetry achieves this performative quality (recall that Kim wrote *HPO* as a forty-year commemoration), I offer a brief survey of his work thus far as a foundation for understanding the main themes and imagery found in *HPO*, which in turn will connect the different types of memory to his poetry.
Chapter 9: Kim Subok – Forty Years of Poetry

9.1 Themes and Topics in Kim Subok’s Poetry

Kim’s life experiences are inextricably linked to the subject matter, imagery, and sentiments found in his poetry. Kim writes that his poems are born from “a dangerous reality in which the ontological self is gradually losing its sense of worth amidst processes that are deemed valuable, such as political and scientific reasoning, and governmentality” (as quoted in Ku, 2012, p. 9). This idea of loss pervades his work, but in addition to offering a poetic reconstruction of loss, Kim uses his poems as a vehicle to negotiate this loss for both himself and the reader. Thus, acknowledging loss is the initial step in engaging in a process of restoration and reconciliation.

The six chapters of HPO reveal a definitive pattern and flow. Each chapter consists of fourteen to sixteen poems that fall into three categories: personal memory, collective memory, and nature’s tableau. Many of the poems that fall under personal and collective memory spheres also move into prosthetic memory-making; these poems will be analyzed at depth in chapter four. Nonetheless, this thematic taxonomy does not confine each poem to its respective category; at times, due to the memory-text quality of the poems, personal recollection encroaches on collective remembering, all the while delivered through the medium of natural imagery. The poems examined in this chapter will be those that do not engage in a prosthetic memory-making, but are situated in personal memory spheres or reside in nature, espousing its transcendental quality. Kim’s use of the arenas of memory, the natural world, and particular themes can be traced back to his first poetry collection, Chirisan t’aryŏng (지리산 타령 / Ballad of Mt. Chiri, 1978).

In her survey of Kim’s body of poetry, Ku Hyesuk (2012) identifies two main areas of conceptual focus: “restoration/reconciliation of subjectivity,” and “[the effects of] industrial society and political and economic modernization” (p. 9). And indeed, we find these two main conceptual areas embedded deep in the psyche of his poetry right from the beginning. For example, in his first publication, *Ballad of Mt. Chiri*, through the memory work achieved through his poetry, the reader is able to cross over from centres of personal trauma to national trauma. Using sites near his ancestral home (Hamyang, South Kyŏngsang Province), such as Mt. Chiri,\(^\text{16}\) the poet conjures the personally familiar while also transforming the nationally familiar site into a place of inquiry—“his poetry is intent on identifying the source of our history’s tragedy”—and through his imagery, links the fragmented self and divided nation to historical suffering and political upheaval in the colonial period (Ku, 2012, pp. 18-19). This inquiry into sources of trauma, avenues of cathartic release, and reconciliation of the self is also seen in the *HPO* poems that engage personal and collective memory spheres. *Ballad of Mt. Chiri* mirrors the mood, language, and imagery found in the *HPO* poems that wrestle with personal and collective memory; he recalls his past and the nation’s past by way of personal vignettes and historical accounts that are told through natural imagery. Chŏng Hŏsŭng (1978), writing of this first collection, asserts that Kim’s poetry works to recover the national self. He notes that although national sorrow is embedded in his poetry, the tragic past can be restored in the present.

\(^{16}\) Mt. Chiri is a site of historical significance; located in the southern part of South Korea, it is a place where anti-imperialist and anti-government struggles took place. In particular, Mt. Chiri was the site of the pro-communist partisan struggle before and after the Korean War.
Following Ballad of Mt. Chiri, written after he graduated from Dankook University and in response to the political climate of the Chun Doohwan era and the national loss suffered in Kwangju, Kim published Naj e naon pandal (낮에 나온 반달 / Half moon at day) in 1980. In this collection we see Kim’s political and historical consciousness forming through his prosody; he uses poetry as a vehicle to restore the historically fragmented self. This second collection correlates with the themes and imagery found in the HPO poems that deal with historical trauma and collective memory; we find the poet trying to reconcile the loss of self on a collective scale as economic modernization stormed through the 1970s and 1980s, irrevocably affecting national and private landscapes. Kim revisits the Kwangju Massacre on both a personal and national level in more than one chapter of HPO: for example, in “When the Azaleas Bloom” (“영산홍필 무렵” / “Yŏngsanhong Pil Muryop”) and “Torrents” (“격류” / “Kyŏngnyu”), while blending different memoryscapes in “Kyŏngho River” (“경호강” / “Kyŏngho Kang”) a poem about the Sanch’ŏng and Hamyang Massacres (산청 함양 양민학살 사건) of 1951.

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17 On May 15, 1980, to protest the dictatorship of General Chun Doohwan who seized power after the assassination of President Park Chunghee the previous year, 150,000 students mobilized outside Seoul station, demanding political reform. Although on May 16 and 17 demonstrations in Seoul had been suspended, Kwangju’s students and activists took up the torch and began their protests. Martial law was extended to the whole country at this point, with riot police and paratroopers occupying key official buildings and universities. On May 18, students gathered at the main gate of Chŏnnam National University in Kwangju, unaware that their school had been closed by martial law. In response to the martial law troops’ occupation, students began a sit-in protest, which was met with brutal force by paratroopers trained in unconventional warfare. Suppression continued throughout the city as civilians became involved, which led to the mobilization of the Citizens’ Army; by May 21, the violence had escalated further with massive shootings occurring in broad daylight. On May 27 the uprising was quashed when thirty tanks rolled into the city. The military had retaken the city with enormous casualties. The best estimates of those injured and killed suggest about five hundred civilians dead and over three thousand injured; while the official figure is much lower (Shin, 2006).

18 In 1951, with many North Korean soldiers fleeing and hiding in the hills of Mt. Chiri in South Kyŏngsang Province, South Korean security forces, under one of the clearest direct order of sanctioned political genocide, killed 705 unarmed civilians – most were women and children (Wright, 2016).
Although wrestling with themes of extinction, loss, and tragedy, his poetry contains a point of “paradoxical reversal”; his poems will initially intensely confront history and present conditions, and when the poem seems to draw to a “point of defeat,” this reversal is invoked (Ku, 2012, p. 29). Rather than close with “marginalized subjectivity” and loss, the poem concludes with “new vitality,” testifying that despair and suffering are not the end (p. 29). These themes of extinction, historical loss, heightened modernization, and coupled with the use of this “paradoxical reversal” are also seen in the poems in *HPO* – for example, in “Nosan Inn” (“노산여인숙 / Nosan Yŏinsuk”).

The city of Samch’ŏnp’o has not protected or given special cultural status to certain buildings that Pak Chaesam (one of Korea’s national poets) once resided and thus, Kim Subok poetically memorializes Nosan Inn, a place of historical and cultural significance. During the Berkeley Translation Workshop (2015), Kim attributed much of his inspiration and poetic mentoring to Pak Chaesam and lamented that modernization efforts and re-development initiatives were effacing Korea’s cultural treasures and history. In order to keep the memory alive, he has poetically immortalized Nosan Inn:

**Nosan Inn**

It was an evening when, as word travelled in from Piwŏl Island, the afterglow, stealing in on the shoulders of the setting sun, and before being rocked to sleep by the waves,
노산여인숙
Nosan Yŏnsuk

저녁 해의 어깨 너머 건너편
Evening sun’s shoulders beyond across
Chŏnyŏk hae ŭi ŭkkæ nŏmŏ kŏnnŏp’yŏn

비월도 에서 기별이 오 면
Piwŏl Island from sign comes when
Piwŏldo esŏ kibyŏr i omyŏn

파도는 치마 속으로 숨어 들어와
waves skirt within (by) hide come into
pado nŭn ch’ima sokgŭro sumŏ tŭrōwa

속살을 자꾸 간지럼하는
bare skin repeatedly tickling
soksar ŭl chakku kanchi rŏphi nŭn

It was a place –
1 Pak Chaesam Road, alley entrance, City of Samch’ŏnp’o –
That, when poets found their way there,
became a night school,
the shade of the camellias
grabbing barely breathing passing shadows
by the wrists.

* Poet Pak Chaesam (1933-1997) was born in Tokyo and
spent his formative years in Samch’ŏnp’o, South Kyŏngsang Province.
노을을 몇 번이나
sunset several times
nowol ŭl myŏt pŏnina

뒤집어서 재워놓는 밤이었다
turn inside out putting to sleep night it was
twichibŏsŏ chaewŏnŏn nŭn pami ŏtta

삼천포 시 박재삼 로 1 번지 골목 어귀
Samch’ŏnp’o city Pak Chaesam Road 1 street alley way entrance
Samch’ŏnp’osi Pak Chaesam-ro 1 pŏnji kolmok ŏgwı

시인들이 찾아 오 면 야간 시인 학교 었던
poets find come when night poet school was
siindŭl i ch’aja omyŏn yagan siin hakkyo yŏttŏn

숨을 죽이고 지나가는 그림자의
breath stifle and passing shadow’s
sum ŭl chugigo chinaga nŭn kŭrimja ŭi

손목을 잡아채는 동백 꽃 그늘 이었던
wrist snatching away camellia flower shade was
sonmok ŭl chabach’ae nŭn tongpaek kkot kŭnŭl iŏttŏn

9.3 Late 1990s – Early 2000s: Negotiating the Self and Sites of Trauma

Kim’s poetry collections from the early 2000s—Sarajin pok’ŏ (사라진 폭포/
Disappearing waterfall) and Umul ŭi nundongja (우물의 눈동자/ The eye of the well)—
explore the metaphysics of existence. Both examine the ontological meanings of the body,
soul, and life (Ku, 2012, p. 14). In these collections—and in HPO—we see Yun Tongju’s19
influence in terms of imagery and lyricism; his expression and language are simple, yet there

19 Yun Tongju (1918-1945) was born in Myŏngdong, a village in northeastern Manchuria. Suspected of
participating in the resistance movement, Yun was arrested by the Japanese on July 14, 1943 and imprisoned in
Fukuoka prison, where he died in 1945. His poetry is notable for “a sensitive awareness of a lost hometown,”
with his later work (1937 onwards) revealing a “ruthless introspection and anxiety about the dark realities of the
times…” and reflections on the inner self” (Yoon Dongju, n.d.).
is a complexity due to the several layers in his poetry. The outer layer of his poems consists of the natural world in which natural objects are personified, and within the heart of the poem lies both truth and trauma. Kim’s poetry returns to favourite sites—Mt. Chiri, Kôje Island, and Yōsu—all areas that have great meaning for the poet and for Korea’s history. As Ku (2012) notes, the natural qualities of these selected sites provide Kim not only with rich poetic imagery, but also with a burden of painful history of “national violence, absence, and destruction”—that enables Kim to probe deeper into issues of loss (p. 14).

Kim’s publications in the early 2000s mirror the poetic flow, imagery, and national sites seen in HPO’s poems that use the natural world to connect with deeper meanings of the self in the process of discovery. It is important to note that many of the poems in HPO that use personification and the natural world to convey existential issues are located in the middle section of each chapter. This middle section serves as a transitional zone, a buffer that draws the reader into a Korean landscape that breathes out its beauty, pain, and untold stories.

This use of the landscape and the land as a site of self-projection enables the poet—and by extension, the reader—to grapple with the more difficult issues of self-discovery, repression, and trauma, all the while maintaining the façade of self-preservation.20 The landscape, and in particular, the sites of Mt. Chiri, Up’o Marsh in Kyŏngsang Province, the plains of Mongolia, Samch’ŏnp’o, etc., are sites used in Kim’s poetry from the late 1990s

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20 In her essay “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” film theorist Laura Mulvey (1999) connects the experience of watching a projected film to the mental action of the audience member identifying, or projecting himself or herself onto the protagonist of the film. The more general understanding of “projection” comes from Freud: projection in psychology has been identified as a way in which individuals can reduce their anxiety by allowing the expression of desires and fears that may be “subconscious in nature without letting the ego understand them” (Sullivan, 2009, p. 410).
and 2000s and revisited in *Heaven’s Post Office*. The poem “Womb of the Lake” (“뱃속의 호수”/ “Paetsok ūi Hosu”) magnifies the beauty of the land and project issues of loss and trauma onto the land while “The Toll of Peonies Withering” (“모란이 지는 종소리”/ “Moran i Chinūn Chong Sori”) and “Morning Dew” (“아침이슬”/ “Ach’im Isul”) explore the ontological meaning of self, life, and death. In all cases, the poet strives to engage the reader with latent or repressed emotions and ideas to surface for closure and reconciliation.

In “The Toll of Peonies Withering,” the poet uses the landscape and personification to engage with metaphysical questions about life:

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모란이 지는 종소리

화성 용주사 저녁 법종은
가슴 깊이 숨을 들여 쉬었다가
멀리 몸속 항아리들을 내보내는데
아랫마을 사람들 둥근 가슴에까지
소리의 뿌리를 담아 재워서
取决 모란이 지는
그 슬픈 미소에
그 얼굴을 갖다 대어 보네

The Toll of Withering Peonies

The evening bell at Yongju Temple in Hwasōng
takes in deep breaths
and sends forth the urns in its bosom,
its tendrils of sound steeping and seasoning.
Reaching as far as the round chests of the village folk down the mountain.
O, it brings its lulling face
To the plaintive smile
Of a withering peony in the field out front.
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**Interlinear Translation and Romanization**

모란이 지는 종소리
Morani Chinūn Chongsori

화성 용주사 저녁 법종은
Hwasōng Yongju evening Buddhist temple bell
Personifying the bell at Yongju Temple, Kim Subok imagines that the sound of the bell resounds profoundly and deeply into the hearts of those who hear it ringing. Agency is given to the sonic waves: first, they travel, touch, and emotionally comfort the “lower village folk” as well as the withering peony. Secondly, as each reverberation propagates, the sounds resound with richer tones, its sonic tendrils “seasoning” and saturating. There is a visual and

21 Yongju Temple was constructed in 854 and is located in the city of Hwasŏng in Kyŏnggi province (Buswell, 2014, p. 1037). There are two bronze bells in the temple compound – the bell mentioned in this poem was designated a national treasure in 1964 under the Cultural Heritage Protection Act (Temple information, n.d.).
sensory comparison between the sound of the bell and the visage of the peony; the low but melancholy tones of the bell bring comfort to the withering peony, almost as if the sound understands the peony’s sadness and fleeting moments on earth. Like in many of his other poems throughout his body of work, Kim is underscoring shared human experience, our connection with the natural world, the transcendental quality of nature, and the fleetingness and fragility of life.

9.4 Late 2000s – Present: Archetypes and Religion

The late 2000s and the 2010s find Kim engaging with religious themes to further unmask repressed emotions and memories. In *Tal ūl ttara kotta* (달을 따라 걷다, *Walking with the moon*, 2008), biblical archetypes and images convey the poet’s emotions and message. Ku (2012) links the image of the wind whirling around dry bones in the poem “Mom” (“몸”/ “Body”) with the biblical prophecy received by Ezekiel: in the Old Testament, Ezekiel sees a valley of dry bones being revived as God breathes life into them (p. 55). However, Kim does not use religious imagery to espouse a certain spiritual philosophy; rather, he uses these archetypes to understand the self on a deeper level, perhaps through the Jungian idea of religion and through the process of “individuation.”

Yi (2014) seconds this assertion, stating that Kim uses religious imagery and archetypes in the poem “Hanŭnim ūi Yŏinsuk” (“하느님의 여인숙”/ “God’s Inn”), in the

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22 Psychiatrist Carl Jung (1875-1961) viewed the individual’s religious impulse as a “sui generis psychological activity” by which the self could mediate archetypal images to move closer to “wholeness,” or the integration of the conscious and subconscious parts of the psyche. Jung introduced this idea of “individuation,” or the process by which a person becomes an “enlightened psychological individual through a progressive experience of the ‘archetypes’” and “the ‘self’.” These archetypes cannot be intimately known by the individual; therefore, the images associated with the archetype are made known to the individual: the mandala, king, hero, saviour, etc. Jung viewed the life of Jesus as the prime example of an “individuation” process. (Kradin, 2014, p. 936)
collection *Oebak* (외박, *Sleeping out*, 2012), not to convey a certain “metaphysical or religious philosophy” but to draw out a “particular foregrounding sentiment and response” from the poetry (p. 87). In other words, he distills a clearer understanding of the self through universal religious images that resonate in the recesses of one’s memory and subconscious. The aim remains the same – to offer reconciliation through memory work. In *HPO*, these religious images—specifically Judeo-Christian images—are visible throughout the collection, in such poems as “Loft” (“다락방”/“Tarakpang”) and “Waning Moon” (“하현달”/“Hahyŏntal”), which will be explored below. These religious archetypes engage with the individual’s psyche, and like the use of personification or imagery in his poetry, they are used to draw the reader deeper into the recesses of memory to explore avenues of reconciliation.

In “Waning Moon,” the poet asks a higher power about the state of the world. During the Berkeley Translation Workshop (2015), Kim Subok recalled the moment he wrote this poem. After watching the news at home, he took his evening stroll along Yangjae River and gazed up at the waning moon in the dark sky – it looked like a traditional half-moon lock, hanging in the sky. With the world news still spinning in his head, Kim felt as if God had left the world to its own devices. Although short and seemingly simple, this poem is laden with emotional and spiritual questioning. Kim uses religious imagery to question and negotiate anxieties and feelings of hopelessness and helplessness. The poet tries to reconcile the chaos he feels by engaging with religious and natural imagery and find closure.
This survey of Kim’s body of work is integral to understanding *HPO* as well as the skopos of the translated text because this collection spans and reflects Kim’s forty years as a poet, with the poet often revisiting the same sites, themes, and images. And because the current collection is a reflection, the poet’s perspective is largely memorial. In other words, memory work, or the active process of remembering and engaging with the past, is the foundational point linking all the poems in this collection. Memory, and more specifically,
personal, collective, and prosthetic memories, are engaged throughout *HPO*, revealing to the reader a performance of memory. In the next section, I examine the three different arenas of memory in the context of specific poems found in *HPO*.
Chapter 10: Prosthetic Memories

10.1 Prosthetic Memories Introduction

In their analysis of the past and history in the lives of Americans, historians Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen assert that remembering the past has an “atomizing effect” that leads to a privatized version of the past – effectively a negative consequence that “reinforce[s] rather than break[s] down barriers between people, resist[s] rather than promote[s] change” (Landsberg, 2004, p. 142). The critique that personal memory is an obstacle to collective identity and processes of remembering can be addressed by adopting a dynamic relationship to memory – one that views the efficacy of other memoryscapes, such as prosthetic memory.

Prosthetic memories transport the reader or viewer into a shared suspended moment in history—either personal or public—a third space in which non-members (individuals who have not lived through the original event) are able to inscribe their emotions and personal loss onto that historical landscape or moment in time. When Kim Subok writes of his own personal tragedy he seems to be inscribing over a critical historical event or tragedy, as if he were writing his feelings on a palimpsest in which the historical moment remains visible underneath his own personal memory. Thus, whether Kim writes of a personal or collective memory, these memories have the tendency to be projected into a third space – a prosthetic memory space.

10.2 Prosthetic Memory as a Concept

Originally formulated in cinematic and film studies, Allison Landsberg’s concept of prosthetic memory has become influential in the realm of memory studies. Landsberg (2014)
postulates that modernity has given way to a new form of public cultural memory called prosthetic memory, which “emerges at the interface between a person and a historical narrative about the past, at an experiential site such as a movie theater or museum” (p. 2). During this experience or contact, a person “sutures herself into a larger history” in which a deeply felt but un-lived memory of a past event is embodied, often appealing to feelings of empathy, thereby resulting in prosthetic memories that can shape the person’s subjectivity and politics (p. 2). Prosthetic memories can act as an alternative medium for the dissemination of memories that, through technologies of mass culture (such as film, photography, and experiential museums), are readily accessible and acquired, “regardless of skin colour, ethnic background, or biology” (p. 2). Thus, prosthetic memories can consolidate group identities or forge new group memberships. Landsberg’s concept is a powerful instrument when trying to understand memory practices in the modern age.

Landsberg (2014) elaborates by examining how prosthetic memories are generated in 9/11 memorials, holocaust experiential museums, and films – all of which are technologies of memory. Following Luger’s analysis of poetry, my analysis of HPO also situates Kim Subok’s poetry as a technology of memory. I argue that HPO is a memory text that falls in the category of technology of memory and thus mediates prosthetic memorial experiences by way of imagery and memory work.

Prosthetic memories evoke a “public past,” a past that becomes available and open to all (Landsberg, 2014, p. 143). As Landsberg (2014) notes, “rather than atomizing people, prosthetic memories open up collective horizons of experience and pave the way for unexpected political alliances” (p. 143). What we gain through the experience of shared emotional responses is a politics of memory in which one might form previously
“unimagined political” and cultural alliances (p. 143). How does the concept of prosthetic memory impact poetry so as to bring about this shared consciousness? By examining poems that engage the personal and collective memory spheres, it is possible to see how many of the poems found in HPO functions as a memory text, acting as a technology of memory and engaging prosthetic memories.

Not all poems in HPO engage in prosthetic memories; however, as HPO was written to commemorate the poet’s 40-year journey with poetry, most poems are found within the poet’s personal or collective memory. Other poems, such as “The Toll of Withering Peonies,” utilize the natural world and Korean landscape for an ontological examination of self. This analysis will specifically examine those poems that engage with performances of memory and produce prosthetic memories. The analysis of HPO as a memory text continues in the next section with personal memory and examples of performances of memory in several of Kim’s poems.
Chapter 11: Memoryscapes in HPO: Personal, Collective and Prosthetic Memories

11.1 Personal Memory in Heaven’s Post Office

The primary task of an analysis of memory, according to Neisser, is to understand “how people use their own past experiences in meeting the present and the future” (quoted in Wang, 2008, p. 306). Shared autobiographical or personal memory may also be viewed as potential collective memories (Wang, 2008). The sharing of personal memories plays a transformative role for a community: personal memories can create, sustain and reinforce a community’s shared past and identity (Wang, 2008, p. 306). The movement from personal to collective memory spheres is evident in Kim’s poetry: his personal memory is woven into the fabric of Korea’s collective memory, thus valorizing the community’s identity, and stabilizing sentiments of loss and shared trauma. Kim uses the natural world as a conduit to share his personal memory, which in turn moves his memory into the public sphere. Thus, his poetry enables this movement from personal to the public, and at times, a national consciousness forms, which may reinforce or interpellate an “always already” national subjectivity.

A poem from HPO will be analyzed that belongs to the dimension of personal memory: “The Belly of the Lake” deals with the poet’s personal memory and trauma – personification is used to project complicated emotions and memories onto a natural object, creating a space in which the poet and reader may negotiate these repressed memories and emotions. Additionally, this poem engages personal and collective memories to generate prosthetic memories.
11.1.1 “The Belly of the Lake"

In “The Belly of the Lake” ("뱃속의 호수"/ “Paetsok ūi hosu”) the lake is a living force with agency – it places the mallards on its “stomach,” communicates with the rain, and emotes by placing “lifeless remains” atop its stomach. The rain, the evening, and the mallards are contained in its ecosystem, and there is affinity among these entities. In a personal communication with the translator, Kim Subok conveyed the personal trauma behind this poem: a former student of his went missing during an outing on a lake and his body was never recovered. He expressed grief over his missing student and on occasion, the memory of his student resurfaces; his community never fully mourned because the student was never given a proper burial. Although this incident occurred many years ago, Kim wrote this poem to reconcile feelings of loss and trauma; the poem acts as a memorial – a poetic chesa, or ancestral rite.23 In the second stanza, we see the lake performing this ancestral rite: “And there are times in the early dawn rain / it places love’s remains on the dining table” – the image of rain falling on the lake when all is still continues this plaintive tone threading throughout the poem, after which the image of the ancestral table/lake’s stomach is introduced. The lake is preparing for the “early dawn” ancestral rite, even providing “love’s remains” with a pair of mourners (mallards) to further convey its loss and pain. The image of this memorial is the conduit through which the poem crosses into the sphere of collective memory. The ancestral rite is a fundamental element of Korean culture, history, and identity, and thus, the use of this poetic chesa provides a common ground for collective remembering.

23 The family of the eldest son usually prepares the food to be offered to the ancestors: taro soup, fish, vegetables, fruits, rice cakes, etc. The food is placed on a lacquer table and oftentimes, a picture of the ancestor is also placed on the table.
뱃속의 호수

가끔 청둥오리 부부를
저녁의 배 위에 올려놓거나
비 오는 이른 새벽 식탁에
사랑의 시체를 올려놓기도 한다
목이 쉬도록 올었던 대낮
아무도 없다

Interlinear Translation and Romanization

The Belly of the Lake

There are times the lake places a pair of mallards, husband and wife, on the evening swell.

And there are times in the early dawn rain it places love’s remains on the dining table.

The broad daylight wailed itself hoarse.

No one was left.
11.1.2 Personal to Collective

As a memorial, this poetic chesa resides in the arena of personal memory, but through the sharing of this personal memory, if we follow Wang’s (2008) assertions about spheres of memory, these personal memories can be transferred into the collective strata of memory – this collective remembering work is performed through the image of the poetic chesa. This transference brings this memory to the public, actively engaging those who were traumatized by his student’s death or those who may have similar shared experiences. This poem is a reminder of HPO as a memory text – structures of feeling emerge as the lake is personified to perform the chesa for the reader, moving the performance of memory from Kim’s personal memory to collective memory spheres. By awakening latent feelings of loss, Kim extends his personal memory beyond its boundaries to try to achieve closure for those affected by this tragic event or bring it into the collective stratum for others to interpret in their own reflecting pools.

As Yu Sŏngho (2015) notes, Kim’s poetry allows us to engage in a process of self-reflection, and to negotiate the past with our present state. In particular, “through robust paradoxes, his poetry affords us the chance to deal with life’s emptiness while also reminding us about the importance of having empathy for others” (p. 117). Yu touches on the first layer of Kim’s poetry – the paradoxes as snapshots located in the Korean landscape become the
vessel by which the reader can delve into this process of self-reflection. By projecting through imagery his personal memories into the domain of public memory, the poet allows for a self-reflective space, which then flows into collective memory reserves. In this first section on personal memory, the movement is from personal memory to collective memory spheres; in the next section, we see how the poem moves into prosthetic memory-making.

**11.1.3 Collective to Prosthetic**

How does poetry as a technology of memory create prosthetic memories? Landsberg (2014) draws our attention to Benedict Anderson’s analysis of how sacred art of the Middle Ages depicted religious icons in contemporary dress rather than culturally appropriate or Semitic attire (p. 5). Anderson notes that this imagery had the effect of “collapsing the past into the present, of flattening time” (p. 5); in other words, this imagery enabled a “natural” claim to the past. By contrast, prosthetic memories do not erase differences or enable a “natural” claim to trauma or connection to the past. While “recognizing the alterity of the ‘other,’” prosthetic memories allow people to connect to a past that they have not lived (Landsberg, 2004, p. 9). Cultural differences are maintained, which makes engagement with a completely different culture possible – and by Landsberg’s claim, it also facilitates an ethical form of engagement.

In “The Belly of the Lake,” the central image of the poetic *chesa* performed by the lake propels the making of prosthetic memory. Rituals are repetitive “mnemonic devices” that give a recognizable form to a practice or an idea – “one might eventually apprehend or come to own or feel connected” to the past through these rituals (Landsberg, 2004, p. 5). Landsberg connects the power of the ritual to the possibility of engaging in an experiential
relationship with an individual or teaching from the past. In its modern form, experiential museums may take on the role of the ritual – a “transferential space” in which people enter “experiential relationships to events through which they themselves did not live” (Landsberg, 2004, p. 113). Experiential museums are like rituals: individuals “must submit themselves to its pace and its logic as there is no way out short of traversing the entire exhibit” (Landsberg, 2004, p. 129). Such an experience makes empathy possible— “whereas sympathy presupposes an initial likeness between subjects, empathy starts from the position of difference” (Landsberg, 2014, 135). Landsberg (2014) suggests that through an experiential relationship as presented in the form of an image or series of images, individuals can understand objects or emotions outside themselves. Applying her analysis to *HPO*, I argue that although the trauma located in the “The Belly of the Lake” may not have been lived or experienced by the reader, through the imagery invoked by the poetic *chesa* allows the construction of a “transferential space” in which he or she may experientially engage with the poet’s past and trauma.

Although Landsberg situates her analysis of prosthetic memories in cinema and other mass cultural technologies, if we consider poetry to be a technology of memory, the mental imagery, mnemonic devices, and the “snapshot” nature of the poem have the capacity to structure an “imagined community” with shared emotions, frameworks, and a common identity that is not bound geographically or socially. As Landsberg (2014) asserts, “memory remains a sensuous phenomenon experienced by the body, and it continues to derive much of its power through affect” (p. 8). In the next section, a closer consideration of the concept of collective memory will further elucidate the concept of prosthetic memory construction.
11.2 Collective Memory in *HPO*

Due to the multidisciplinary approach of memory studies, the term “collective memory” lacks a distinct and agreed-upon definition. Yadin Dudai defines collective memory as “a body of knowledge shared by a ‘culture of individuals,’” while John Bodnar sees collective memory as a “space of contestation” in which groups struggle with those in power to control the understanding of the past (as quoted in Wertsch & Roediger, 2008, p. 318). Collective memory includes other areas of investigation, such as “collective remembering,” but for the purposes of this analysis, I outline my own basic understanding and definition of collective memory.

Although a shared understanding of collective memory is beginning to emerge in memory studies, what is important for this analysis is the fact that collective memory stresses the collective: “members of a group share a similar set of cultural tools, especially narrative forms, when understanding the past” (Wertsch & Roediger, 2008, p. 324). These cultural tools can include written texts, symbols, and financial records (p. 322). Landsberg (2014) further complicates the notion of collective memory by harnessing Arjun Appadurai’s assertion of the “complicated global flow of capital, media, ideology, and so forth” (p. 10). She draws our attention to the inadequacy of the theory of collective memory as articulated

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24 Appadurai (1990), theorizing about globalization and culture, identifies five factors that are in constant flux and contribute to global cultural flow. He labels these five dimensions “-scapes”: the ethnoscape (migration of people across cultures and borders; a more fluid and mobile movement of communities); the technoscape (through the power of technology, new types of interactions and exchanges take place at unprecedented speeds); the finanscape (closely related to the economy, which is constantly in flux and unpredictable); the mediascape; and the ideoscape (these last two scapes are related to the dissemination of information and images on an international and national scale—media outlets shape the “imagined world” we live in while ideoscapes describe hegemonic ideologies of government and those that directly oppose those discourses). In addition to these original five scapes, Coupland has coined the idea of linguascapes, which describes the effect of globalization on standard notions of territory, cultural practices, language use, communication, etc. (King, 2007, p. 322).
by Halbwachs, claiming that “the very notion of global flows challenges the idea of stable shared frameworks” (p. 10). Technologies of memory, such as poetry in our case, further challenge the way in which we traditionally view memory and the movement of memory through different “scapes.”

Kim in his poetry uses an imagistic form of remembering, often taking his personal recollections and experiences, as we saw in the previous section on personal memory, and connects these personal memories to the larger, public or national history. Thus, his personal memories are brought forth into a public space, bolstering a shared understanding of what is considered collective memory. In performing this type of act of memory “translation,” he is unearthing repressed collective memories that have failed to translate. This process of translation gives rise to reflection and control—“processes that take on particular importance when dealing with traumatic experience” (Wertsch & Roediger, 2008, p. 323). Harber and Pennebaker support the importance of memory “translation” and posit that those who experience trauma must consciously confront the memories and emotions associated with that trauma through the translation of the chaos of “traumatic ideation and feelings into coherent language” (as quoted in Wertsch & Roediger, 2008, pp. 323-324). Treatment of repressed trauma and feelings of outrage and anger are negotiated in “To the Bird”; this poem reveals two dimensions of memory: collective memory and a shared framework of feeling via prosthetic memories. Through this movement of memory from collective to prosthetic, the performative nature of memory is revealed in the memory text.
11.2.1 “To the Bird” and Prosthetic Memory Engagement through P.O.V.

“To the Bird” (“새에게”/ “Sae ege”) was written after the Sewŏl Ferry Disaster of 2014: the ferry capsized and sank, killing 476 passengers on board, the majority of them students at Tanwŏn Secondary School. This tragedy ignited social, religious, and political protest; the ferry was owned by Yu Pyŏngŭn, leader of one of the two branches of the Kuwŏnp’a religious organization that has been mired in other financial and criminal scandals. The public placed a great deal of the blame for the disaster on the rescue operation and its lack of urgency and efficiency. The Pak Kŭnhye administration came under scrutiny, too, specifically for its lack of sensitivity in the aftermath. In a personal conversation with the translator, Kim expressed his deep grief and his own personal outrage—which was mirrored by the public—toward the politicians who seemed to be crying crocodile tears. In this next poem, Kim is speaking to one of these politicians he saw on television, telling him to stop the flow of “empty tears.”

새에게

함부로 울지 마라
새벽 숲이 참회하는
가지 위에서
우리 어머닌 자식들을 헤늘로
먼저 보냈다

To the Bird

Don’t cry empty tears
from your perch in the penitent woods at dawn
Our mother saw off her two children
to heaven
too soon
Interlinear Translation and Romanization

새에게
Sae ege

함부로 올지 마라
Carelessly cry don’t
Hamburo ulji mara

새벽 숲이 참회하는
Dawn forest being penitent
Saebyŏk sup i ch’amhoe hanŭn

가지 위에서
Branch top (at)
Kaji wi esŏ

우리 어머닌 자식 둘을 하늘로
My mother children two heaven towards
Uri ōmŏni ’n chashik tul ŭl hanŭl lo

먼저 보냈다
First sent off
Mŏnjŏ ponaetta

11.2.2 Collective to Prosthetic: Empathy and Point-of-View

In the first draft of the translation, I translated the third line as: “My mother saw off her two children,” but after locating the poem’s perspective, I emended that line to a more literal “Our mother saw off her two children.” The use of “our” is key in placing the emotions, mood, voice, and, most important, the perspective of the poem – Kim is speaking on behalf of all mothers and fathers in Korea. He viewed this tragedy as an event that
affected all families in Korea and felt that it was this honesty and empathy that were absent in the eyes of the politicians.

How does this poem activate a performance of memory? A first reading might suggest that this poem is about the poet’s own loss of siblings. Even so, it is securely located in collective remembering and in the collective memory sphere. Kim wrote this poem to cope with feelings of outrage and loss, and to create a “space of contestation” to emotionally navigate the 2014 disaster – not just for himself but for the collective body, by enlarge this space of emotional negotiation outward to the sphere of collective memory. This poem shows us how a memory text can enable individuals to “inhabit subject positions and pasts through which they might not themselves have lived and to which they have no ‘natural’ connection” (Landsberg, 2014, 14).

Making a case for the ability of cinema to structure ethical thinking, Landsberg (2009) in her “Memory, Empathy, and the Politics of Identification” notes that cinematic technology and practice are central to an understanding of prosthetic memory and its relationship to empathy by virtue of their “capacity to position viewers in relation to the unfolding narrative” (p. 223). She asserts that point-of-view shots in film force the spectator to see the world through someone else’s eyes, taking into account the mental and emotional life of the protagonist, thereby increasing the empathetic response of the spectator (2009, p. 225). It is this impact of the point-of-view cinematic technique that I transfer to the memory text when analyzing the prosthetic quality of the poem. As we saw in the analysis of “The Belly of the Lake,” empathy plays an important role in creating a prosthetic memorial experience. In that poem, the point of departure was in the poet’s personal memory sphere and prosthetic memories were created through a shared experience via the ritual; in “To the
Bird,” the poem begins in the collective memory sphere with the point-of-view device utilized to allow the reader to engage in empathy with the original event and identification of the collective’s loss.

Landsberg (2009) views empathy as a “leap, a projection, from the empathizer to the object of contemplation,” and notes that this experience of empathy “requires an act of imagination” in which a cognitive process of “intellectual engagement with the plight of the other” is necessary (p. 223). Landsberg (2009) connects empathy and intellectual and emotional contact with cinema’s role in producing prosthetic memories that go beyond the spectator’s own lived experiences, memories that force “us to confront, and enter into a relationship of responsibility and commitment toward others” (p. 225). As we have seen, this process of confrontation and negotiation occurs in many sites and contexts, such as films, 9/11 memorials, and Holocaust museums—all sites that readily produce prosthetic memories. And as we saw in “The Belly of the Lake,” rituals, specifically, the image of the chesa in the poem, serve as a site of experiential engagement. This engagement produces feelings of empathy, which then generates prosthetic memories—memories that are un-lived but reified through “sensuous engagement.”

Similarly, in “To the Bird,” the poet calls attention to the lack of empathy felt by the public, especially politicians. The personification of the bird (the unfeeling politician) and the point-of-view of the poem brings the reader to an experiential relationship of understanding. Although it is difficult to closely identify with those who lost their children in the Sewŏl tragedy, the experience of engaging with the point-of-view of the poem “fosters an otherwise unattainable insight into the original event … we take on their [the parents’] memories and become their prostheses” (Landsberg, 2004, 136).
The poem is also performative in that it invites the reader to move in and out of identifications with the speaker. It invites all readers, even those who did not experience the Sewŏl Ferry Disaster through the loss of a loved one, to empathize and build shared networks of feeling, experience, and identity. Poems that elide into prosthetic memorial spheres are an “affective representation” resulting in a powerful reflective process in which “reflective screens” enable us to “recognize and reaffirm our loves and our hates, our commitments to family, friends, community, nation and the transcendental”; in this way, our “identity is deepened and reinforced” (Sodaro, 2017, p. 4). And according to Landsberg, the prosthetic memories that are produced through this process can shape a person’s subjectivity and politics, promising a “new form of ethical political engagement” (Sodaro, 2017, p. 5) – this was the very goal of the poet when he set to write this poem: to unmask and form alliances through political and social solidarity.

11.3 Poetry as a Monument: Interplay of Memoryscapes in “Torrents”

Among the poems in *HPO*, perhaps the clearest example of the performative aspect of memory is found in “Torrents” (“격류”/“Kyŏngnyu”). The interplay of all three memoryscapes occurs in this poem:
1980 년 5월 17일 서울 서소문로
정동 골목 신아일보 붉은 벽돌 사옥 1층
왼쪽 계엄 검열을 받기 위한 대학신문 검열
대장을 들고 올라가다가 좁은 외신 텔레스
실에서 쏟아져 나오는 ‘광주
민간인 500 명 학살, 군부 중앙청 광장
탱크 서울 진입했다’는 외신 급보를 보고
숨이 막혀 쓰러진 적이 있었다.

On May 17, 1980, when I carried
the galley proofs of my university
newspaper up to the left of the 1st
floor of the red brick building in the alley in
Chŏngdong off Sŏsomun Blvd in
Seoul that houses the Shina Daily
News to gain clearance from the
censor’s office, an emergency dispatch
spilled out of the cramped foreign
press telex office—“500 Civilians
Slaughtered in Kwangju, Tanks Roll
into Chungangch’ŏng Square”—the
blood drained from my body and
everything went black.

Was it then, twenty years ago?

The current of the upper reaches
of the South River as it runs along Mt.
Chiri in Chungsan-ri was calling me,
and the royal azaleas on the cliffs on
the far side bloomed so enticing, that I
once nearly drowned in its swelling
embrace.

Interlinear Translation and Romanization

격류
Kyŏngnyu

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Korean</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980 년 5월 17일 서울 서소문로 정동 골목</td>
<td>On May 17, 1980, when I carried</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980 year 5 month 17 day Seoul Sŏsomun Blvd Chŏngdong alley</td>
<td>the galley proofs of my university</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980 nyŏn 5 wŏl 17 il Sŏul Sŏsomunno Chŏngdong kolmok</td>
<td>newspaper up to the left of the 1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>신아 일보 붉은 벽돌 사옥 1층 왼쪽 계엄</td>
<td>floor of the red brick building in the alley in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shina daily news red brick office building 1 floor left martial law</td>
<td>Chŏngdong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>검열을 받기 위한 대학 신문 검열 대장을 들고</td>
<td>censorship to receive university newspaper censor proofs holding and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>censorship to receive university newspaper censor proofs holding and</td>
<td>kŏmyŏl ŭl patki wihan taehak shinmun kŏmyŏl taejang ŭl tulgo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>올라가 다가 좁은 외신 텔레스 실에서</td>
<td>go up and then cramped foreign press telex office (from)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>olla kadaga chobŭn oeshin t’elleksŭ sil esŏ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Yu (2015) notes that in this poem Kim does not use the explicit topic marker “I” (“나는”/ na nunn) but it is clear that the poem contains two distinct memories that are delineated into two different “torrents”: “the first is the social torrent, and the other is of an actual torrent” (p. 125). Both describe a life-threatening moment of crisis and are located in memory (Yu, 2015, p. 125). In the first “torrent,” the poet’s personal memory is tied to historical trauma (collective remembering) – the Kwangju Massacre. His lapse into unconsciousness at the news of the massacre is juxtaposed with his own near-death experience as a child – the second “torrent” in this poem.
11.3.1 Poetry as a Monument: Personal, Collective, and Prosthetic

Of the poems analyzed thus far, “Torrents” is an “exemplary memorial,” a kind of monument. Analyzing 9/11 poetry, Luger (2014) observes that poetry, like a monument, “can serve a range of memorial purposes: a poem can carry the dead into our present lives, make space for grief, and offer a vocabulary for mourning” (p. 190). And like a monument, a poem is “timeless” and “timely”: it is a textual response to and record of the events of its day (Luger, 2014, p. 190). Most important, both poetry and monuments depend on figuration: “monuments invite visitors to interpret the symbolism inherent in their ‘reflecting pools’…,” as does poetry (Luger, 2014, p. 190).

According to Mitchell (2013), monuments are situated in central squares of cities and “aid in the establishment of memory” while also reflecting “national aims” (p. 445) or even subversive aims, depending on the narrative. Thus, monuments, although seemingly fixed, can be transformed in accordance with how their associate meaning and history are altered (Mitchell, 2013). Following Luger’s line of inquiry, “Torrents” is a poetic monument, a textual record of lived experience that challenges national or official discourses of the Kwangju Massacre. For example, Mitchell (2013) points out that memorials whose purpose is to disrupt dominant hegemonies through collective memory production remain “fragmented and partial,” (p. 453) revealing that counter-hegemonic agendas still find difficulty gaining recognition in shared landscapes. As a poetic monument, “Torrents” is uncoupled from narratives that are usually connected with sites of national trauma – it is not a monument of victimization or nationalism but stands rather to engage the reader’s mimetic function of empathy and to build awareness.
Due to the “monumental” characteristic of “Torrents,” the location of memory spheres is unique: the poem conflates personal and collective memory spheres, thereby contributing further to prosthetic memory-making. The prosthetic memory production occurs through a process of “meaning making”—an active cognitive process of interpreting discourses. In meaning making, individuals can draw on their own cultural resources and familiar situations to make sense of the situation. (Zittoun & Brinkmann, 2012). The conflation of memory spheres augments the process of meaning making: structures of feeling emerge as the reader situates herself in the public past while also engaging in the personal trauma of the poet. The trauma of the Kwangju Massacre is felt on an emotional level through the relational memory of the poet.

11.3.2 Conflation of Personal and Collective Memory Spheres

The first “torrent” belongs in personal and collective memoriescapes – the point-of-view belongs to the poet, but the national event or trauma is located in the public sphere. “Clearance from the censor’s office” is significant: this line brings us out into the political and social milieu of the new regime (Chun Doohwan). Although this first stanza is an anecdote, the atmosphere and mood of the poem are collectively shared. We see the dispatch spill out from the telex office – the news is not personal and it reads like a newspaper headline. Thus, there is a conflation of personal and collective memory spheres. This conflation is also present in the third stanza or the second “torrent.”

The poem’s second “torrent” falls within personal memory as the poet recalls a time in his childhood when he nearly drowned, but it is also tied to the collective remembering of the Kwangju Massacre. These two seemingly unrelated events are further connected by two
elements: a near-death experience and the image of red – the blood of the “slaughtered innocents” and the enticing red azaleas. Thus, these two elements operate in relational memory (between source memories and associative recognition) as they are stimuli, triggering both traumatic events as well as the emotions associated with each context.

Like the first “torrent,” the second is a personal account, but it reads somewhat distant. We do not know how the poet felt; we are not explicitly told about his emotive response to almost drowning. It is precisely the space between what is not said and what is made explicit that the reader occupies. We project our own feelings of how it must have been (perhaps recalling our own traumatic memories and emotions), taking us through the process of “meaning making” (Landsberg, 2004). Thus, “Torrents” is a poetic monument that works to convey an experiential relationship akin to experiential museums.

Although the memory is located in the personal, in the absence of “I” the reader may conjure images in her mind or imagine herself in the poet’s position. By relating these two “torrents,” the poet effectively connects the reader to a third space in which the reader can make meaning—through this parallelism, the reader understands the gravity of the incident, connecting both narratives in her own world as well as transmitting her own mental image-making into the poet’s narrative. Landsberg (2004) identifies this engagement as the key component of “meaning making,” as opposed to “passively absorbing information” (p. 145). Prosthetic memories are conveyed in this third space, which the reader leaves with a greater capacity to understand the traumatic historical event – even without having lived through it.
Chapter 12: Conclusion

Not all poems in HPO expand to prosthetic memory production; “The Toll of Peonies Withering” and other poems not mentioned in this thesis such as “Beneath Mt. Chiri” (‘지리산 그 어느 아래’/ Chiris’an kŭ ŏnŭ A’ae), and “The Pagoda, Reading” (“탑, 책을 읽다”/ T’ap Ch’aek ŭl Ikt’a”) engage with the natural world and describe its transcendental quality. However, the majority fall into personal and/or collective memory spheres, with many of these poems providing a space for “sensous engagement,” producing a shared emotive connection to an un-lived public event or producing empathy with the poet’s own personal trauma. There are also other poems within this vein of prosthetic memory-making that are located in the P.O.V. of a third party – for example, “Pak Sugŭn” (“박수근”) and “Somewhere Along the South Han River” (“남한강 그 어디쯤”/ Nam Han’gang kŭ Ŭditchŭm”). These poems are not located in the poet’s personal memory sphere, but are third-person testimonies – a re-telling of pivotal traumatic events. “Somewhere Along the South Han River” is the testimony of the Tanyang village head who lost his family and his home, and “Pak Sugŭn” recalls the painter’s flight out of North Korea and the implications of his crossing. However, to maintain a deeper connection to the narrative and enable a prosthetic memory experience, both were translated to include the first-person perspective.

The three poems in this thesis were included for analysis as they best showcase the dream-like quality of the memory text—the narrative is not plain to the reader—and in the case of “Torrents,” time is not linear; therefore, the memory work that occurs permits the reader to enter into a third space of prosthetic engagement. The pain, trauma, and emotion located in the memory text can be taken on by the reader, allowing an empathetic space of
engagement with the other, enabling the reader to make sense of the other’s trauma – which can be further augmented by how we process this trauma in our own reflecting pools.

Landsberg underscores the importance of prosthetic memories in today’s mass-mediated networks—an abundance of tools and avenues for engagement exist, however, there seems to be a lack of empathy and understanding. It is perhaps now more than ever that ethical engagement with others—an engagement that does not erase cultural differences and does not appropriate—is critical at this nexus of politics, social media, and mass culture. This thesis highlights that poetry is a memory text that can use the other’s personal and collective histories to create political and social alliances. I hope that the methodology and analysis portions provide the reader necessary background for the final portion – the translation of *Heaven’s Post Office*.  

**Table 12.1 Kim Subok: List of Works**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Title of Book</th>
<th>Date of Publication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><em>Chirisan t’aryŏng</em> (지리산 타령, Ballad of Mount Chiri)</td>
<td>1977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><em>Naj e naon pandal</em> (낮에 나온 반달, Half moon at day)</td>
<td>1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><em>Sae rŭl kidarimyŏ</em> (새를 기다리며, Waiting for birds)</td>
<td>1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><em>Tto tarŭn sawŏl</em> (또 다른 사월, Another April)</td>
<td>1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td><em>Kidohanŭn namu</em> (기도하는 나무, The praying tree)</td>
<td>1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td><em>Modŭn kil tŭl ŭn norae rŭl purŭnda</em> (모든 길들은 노래를 부른다, All the roads are singing)</td>
<td>1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td><em>Sarajin p’okp’o</em> (사라진 폭포, Disappearing waterfall)</td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td><em>Umul ŭi nundongja</em> (우물 의 눈 동자, The eye of the well)</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td><em>Tal ŭl ttaara kŏtta</em> (달을 따라 간다, Walking with the moon)</td>
<td>2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td><em>Oebak</em> (외박, Sleeping out)</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td><em>Hanŭl uch’eguk</em> (하늘 우체국, Heaven’s post office)</td>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td><em>Pam hanŭl i si rŭl ssŭda</em> (밤하늘이 시를 쓰다, The night sky writes poetry: An ode to Yun Tongju)</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bibliography

**Translation Methodology Sources**


Liu, J. (2012). Habitus of translators as socialized individuals: Bourdieu’s account. Theory and Practice in Language Studies, 2(6), 1168-1173. DOI:10.4304/tpls.2.6.1168-1173


Translation Analysis Sources


Korean Sources

Chŏng Hŏsŏng (1978). Sujikchŏk salm ŭi si wa sup’yŏngjŏk si [Poetry in the vertical life and poetry in horizons for living]. Ch’angjak kwa Pip’yŏng [Creation & Criticism], 13(1), 229-239.


Appendices

Appendix A: Translation of *Heaven’s Post Office*

**PART 1**

봄꽃

입이 열리듯이
잎이 웃는다
아, 입을 벌리고
산수유 잎 웃는다
웃을 일도 없는
나는 입도 없다

아, 틀어 막혔던 입을 열고 피는 꽃들

**Spring Flowers**

A bud smiles
like a mouth abloom
Oh, mouth unfolded,
the petals of the cornelian cherry open in a smile
But me,
Neither reason
Nor mouth to smile

Oh, the flowers that bloom from my tightly wound mouth
목련 절 무렵

숨통이 터질 것 같다고
이 애미 죽는 꼴 봐
골목 끝 담장 너머
아득히 뒤에서 들려오는
베아리같이 아팠던

When the Magnolias Fade

You knocked the wind right out of me,

you want to see your mother to an early grave?

comes her pained voice

from over the wall at the end of the alley

echoing faintly behind me.
Hearing from Raindrops

Bringing things back from the dead—
It’s no big deal
Pitter, patter
said the raindrops,
as they wound an old watch.
It’s good to hear from you,
It’s been much too long
꽃이 지는 사이

꽃이 피는 걸음걸이와
사람들 사이 걸음걸이가
같아지는 것

꽃이 피는 것을 보고
네가 말을 걸어오는 것

꽃이 너에게 와 웃어 주는
그 격량이 급이치는

말을 건너는 것

While the Flowers Were Wilting

The pace of flowers blooming and
the steps between people
are becoming one and the same

Flowers bloom and
your words beckon me

The swell of flowers falls into you, smiling,
fording over meandering words.
영산홍 필 무렵

오월이여
배를 쩔고
저 하늘로 가라
산을 만나서
강을 건너서
죽어서도 꽃으로 다시
피어나지 못하는 사람들
흘린 피 모두 거두어
다시 불타오르리라는
고백을 듣는다

When the Azaleas Blaze

O May!

Be so bold as to
rise high to the sky

Meet the mountains
cross the rivers
gather the blood spilled by those who
can never again blossom even in death

And I will listen to your
Burning declaration again.
 venta

실비들 가지 흔드는
바람의 눈이
비를 맞고 서 있는
왜가리 눈과 마주치네
내리던 비도 실눈을 눈감아 주네

The Marsh

As the willow-sweeping wind
locks eyes
with the rain-soaked heron
the threads of falling rain
their thin eyes
turn a blind eye
새벽에

Dawn

Pushing past my cooled chest and

slipping out from the quilt, the moon,

with its shining eyes, growing ever more distant

Looks down from above
새에게

함부로 울지 마라
새벽 숲이 참회하는
가지 위에서
우리 어머닌 자식 둘을 하늘로
먼저 보냈다

To the Bird

Don’t cry empty tears
from your perch in the penitent woods at dawn

Our mother saw off her two children
to heaven
too soon
별이 돌아날 무렵

당신이 더욱 깊이 어두워져서
내가 더욱 빛이 났어요

19 년 전 교통사고로 시력을 잃은
강화 덕포진 교육박물관 이인숙 관장이
남편 김동선 씨의 얼굴을 쓰다듬으며 말했다

When Stars Come Out

As you darkened deeper
I shone brighter,

said Yi Insuk, Director of the Education Museum at Tŏkp’ojin on Kanghwa Island, who had lost her sight in a traffic accident 19 years ago, to her husband Kim Tongsŏn as she stroked his face.
초승달 눈뜰 때

봄밤 뗴산 만개한 벚꽃들 독하게 웃는 소리
한집 개가 짖어대니 건너서도 짖어댄다
할아버지도 조선낫을 목이 쉬도록 갈았겠지요

When the Crescent Moon Opens its Eyes

On a spring night, effervescent cherry blossoms cackle in the hills out back
Somebody’s dog barks and howls, setting off another dog across the way
My grandfather must have sharpened his Chosŏn sickle until it cut clean and true.
At Hahoe Village

Even the wind whom I hated with all my being
looks upon me with a wry smile.

Through that smile

Lightning must have passed
Followed by a thunder clap
Rumour

Hiding in the pollen-laden air, within the pirouetting peach blossoms,
the crescent moon

steals up with puckered lips
to the flowers

only to be slapped but hard
across the cheeks
어느 봄날

내설악 십이선녀복숭아탕
안개가 걷히는
천도화 한 그루 얼굴 내밀고
죽을 것 같았던
적요 속에서
죽탁을 하며
웃고 있다

One Spring Day

The Peach Blossom Pools of the Twelve Fairies, Inner Mt. Sŏrak

A mythical peach tree
pokes its head through the clearing mist
and sinks its roots,
smiling
into a silence more
desolate than death.
PART 2

하현달

Where has God gone
Leaving a lock
hanging there
in the sky?
Sun

On the Mongolian grasslands

Belly full-term taut, a mare

in the final throes of labour –

Thud

pushes her foal out –

and a passing cloud sticks out its long tongue, lapping

the little thing and propping it up.
사이

살가죽이 다 벗겨진
강의 저녁을 바라본다
뼈가 빠지도록 걸어온
은사시나무 숲 속 사이로
발목이 불거져 나와 있다

In Between

Regarding the river in evening,
as it ripples like flayed ribbons of flesh.
My ankles swollen like knots,
I weave my way through the silver poplars,
walking my legs jointless.
일출

너의 눈동자는 떠오르지 않았다
숨이 막이고
문이 왕달랐다
죽어야 살 수 있단다
창을 깨고
어깨를 견고
사랑의 눈을 감기고
죽음의 산맥들
저 자궁 속의 발자국들
저 눈동자 속의
책장을 넘기는 사막의 모래들
초원의 입술들
드디어
환하게 웃네

Sunrise

Your eye has yet to rise.

Breath stifled,
the door shut tight.

Only from death comes life.

You break through the window,
take me in your warm clutches and
close my loving eyes.

And beneath that eye of yours,
the page-turning desert sands
and the deathly still mountains
and the stirrings in the womb
and the curvy lips of the grasslands

Finally
beam to a smile
수평선

칼을 물고 달려드는 파도에게
무지개가 되라고
고통의 꽃이 되라고
잔잔한 무덤이 되라고
참회하는 사람 누워 있습니다

Horizon

To the slashing waves, lunging:
blossom from your pain
beam like a rainbow
still yourself like a grave.

Here lies a body in contrition.
호수

달의 그림자를 넘어뜨리고 싶었던 거울 속에서 면데서 천둥이 치고 사랑의 얼굴이 떠오를 때 눈을 삐켜버리는 추억을 보았다

Lake

Through the looking-glass Whose moon shadow I wished to topple over A peel of distant thunder rumbled and when those beloved faces rose up I saw memories that devour my mind’s eye
다락방

저녁 하늘의 무릎을 베고
달빛을 안고
나에게 용서를 빌었던
죄도 없이
구름이 가슴을 웅크리고
울고 있다

Loft

I lay my head to rest in heaven’s lap
and cradle the moonlight in my arms

Begging me for forgiveness
for wrongs they never wrought,

the clouds hunker down,
and weep.
An Evening When the Daffodils Were in Bloom

Mother rushed through her 80th birthday celebration and said,

*I’ll be fine,*

*I can just pick up a roll of kimbap at the rest stop on my way.*

*I really mustn’t miss Mass to pray with the saints for the souls in purgatory.*

Lost in thought, while gazing at the birds flitting among the flowering quince along Yangjae stream–

I missed your call telling me you arrived home safely from Mass and
I never heard your voice, telling me that the daffodils lining the alley were in full bloom.
설연화

Don’t sacrifice yourself for love.

Thundering skies have passed and

a rainbow of silence has resurfaced

between you and me,

Between

the clear-eyed sun and

the sleeping moon,

like a wordless snow fall

between that time –

gone to the point of death, but alive

like the snow-capped mountain’s flickering gaze,

it looks down upon me.
똥단배 한 칩

방이 텅 비었다
큰애는 늦는다고 하고
작은애는 함정동 잘 들어갔는지 모르겠다

뒷산 안 올던 빚꾸기 오래된 풍경 소리처럼
폭풍 속에서도 혼들리지 않았는데
가는 봐비에도 자꾸 젖는다

허공의 숲을 헤쳐 나간다

오후의 호수에는
자꾸 밀려서 떠다니는 골목들
과학의 얼굴들 혼들리고

빈방을 둘러서 노를 쏜다

저 달에는 참회의
물결이 일었었지
격량도 살았지

동아줄도 없는
먼 수평선도 없는

저물여가는 해의 심장을
깊은 수심 아래로 밀어 넣으면 달려왔던
그 혼들리는 노을 바다에서

노를 그만 멈추었네
A Sailboat

The house is empty.
My oldest says she’ll be late and
my youngest, I wonder if she arrived at Hapchŏng-dong by now.

Like the cuckoo’s silent call in the hills out back
and the sound of an age-old wind bell,

I was unfazed by wind and waves but
soaked by the fine-falling spring rain.

Cleaving through the wooded void, I set off

By the afternoon’s lake
alleyways are sent adrift, pushed over and over,
and the waves’ faces shake.

Encircling my empty home, I continue to dip my oars

Didn’t contrition billow up from that moon,
harboring raging waters?

Without a lifeline
without even a distant horizon

Pushing deep into the waters, the heart of the sun sets,
and by the sea, quivering from the racing twilight glow,
I let go of my oars.
저녁 강

할머니는 저 긴 울음을
치마폭에 다 닦지 못하고
네가, 네가
내 죽거들랑
명주단으로 감싸 안아달라고 했다
그 강둑길 따라가다가
저녁 물결을 타고 날으는
쇠기러기처럼
날아가셨겠지

River at Evening

Listen, my dear,

my grandmother said, weeping long pleats of tears
more than her skirt could hold

When I’m no more,
bury me in silk cloth.

She must have tread that riverbank
like a speckled belly goose riding the evening ripples
and flown away.
우포늪

너는 나에게
돌은 절대 연꽃이 되지 않는다고
나에게 연꽃 되라 하고
죽어서도 고개를 쳐드는
가시연꽃이 피는 꿈을 꾼게 한다

Wetlands at U’po

You – enjoin me
To become a lotus blossom,
something a stone can never do.

And you inspire me
to dream of becoming
a foxnut flower that raises its head,
even when wilted and dead.
오래된 우물

눈의 통증이 점점 심해진다
하늘 속에서 벼락이 치는가 보다
시퍼렇게 맑은 눈동자가 빠져 있던
가을 하늘 기슭

An Old Well

The pain in my eyes is getting worse.
Is that lightning?
Its clear onyx pupils sunken into
the verge of the autumn sky
PART 3

바다보다 면 강에게

공장들이 들어서면서
매춘부 처마처럼 펄럭이지만
영원히 기다릴게
누구보다도 순결해
꽃의 목덜미가 떨어진다 해도
고백하고 싶어
먼 바다보다 더 면
너에게로 가는 강에게

To the River, Farther Than the Sea

The factories went up, fluttering like the hem of a hooker’s skirt
But I’ll always be here waiting.
Virginal, more so than anyone else.
The flowers may droop and wither, but I want to confess,
to the far river, farther than the sea,
that runs through to you.
The Belly of the Lake

There are times the lake places
a pair of mallards, husband and wife,
on the evening swell.

And there are times in the early dawn rain
it places love’s remains on the dining table.

The broad daylight wailed itself hoarse.

No one was left.
노산여인숙

지녁 해의 어깨 너머 건너편

비월도에서 기별이 오면

파도는 치마 속으로 숨어 들어와

속살을 자꾸 간지럽히는

노을을 몇 번이나

뒤집어서 재워놓는 밤이었다

삼천포시 박재삼로 1번지 골목 어귀

시인들이 찾아오는 야간 시인학교였던

숨을 죽이고 지나가는 그림자의

손목을 잡아채는 동백꽃 그늘이었던
Nosan Inn

It was an evening when,

as word travelled in from Piwŏl Island,

the afterglow,

stealing in on the shoulders of the setting sun,

and before being rocked to sleep by the waves,

nestled among their pleats,

tickling their bare skin.

It was a place –

1 Pak Chaesam Road, alley entrance, City of Samch’ŏnp’o –

That, when poets found their way there,

became a night school,

the shade of the camellias

grabbing barely breathing passing shadows

by the wrists.

* Poet Pak Chaesam (1933-1997) was born in Tokyo and spent his formative years in Samch’ŏnp’o, South Kyŏngsang Province.
A Trap

By Haengdam Island, with one side of its chest keeling and corroding
a lone row boat,
unable to slip out with one arm,
floats out
on the evening tide

*Haengdam Island, located in south Ch’ungch’ŏng Province, became the focus of a large controversial development project.*
모란이 지는 종소리

화성 용주사 저녁 법종은
가슴 깊이 숨을 들여 쉬었다가
멀리 몸속 항아리들을 내보내는데
아랫마을 사람들 둥근 가슴에까지
소리의 뿌리를 담아 재워서
들 앞 모란이 지는
그 슬픈 미소에
그 얼굴을 갖다 대어 보네

The Toll of Peonies Withering

The evening bell at Yongju Temple in Hwasŏng

takes in deep breaths

and sends forth the urns in its bosom,

its tendrils of sound steeping and seasoning.

Reaching as far as the round chests of the village folk down the mountain.

O, it brings its lulling face

To the plaintive smile

of a withering peony in the field out front.
봄비

고개를 들고 나를 쳐다보라고
밤새도록 다그치며 말했다
한번 죽는 목숨이지만
모든 죽어가는 것들 살리겠다고
나를 바라보라고
나를 한번만이라도 똑바로 쳐다보라고

Spring Rain

Look up at me, I said,
prodding you all night long.

Death will blow out life’s embers
But let me bring back to life all that is dying

Look at me, I said,
just once, eye to eye.
6월에

염천 하늘에 비가 뿌렸다

땅속 지렁이들 너무나 기뻐서

식솔들 이끌고 소풍 나왔다가

온통 배가 터져버린

공동묘지들

In June

Rain sprinkled down from the sweating sky

The earthworms, overjoyed
came out for a picnic with their brood in tow –

Bellies bursting,
formed
a cemetery of mounds
문밖에서

하늘의 열쇠를 잃어버린 천사처럼
쇠백로 한 마리 심장이 맑을 것 같은
보름달을 바라보며
한없이 기다리고 서 있네

Locked Out

Like an angel who has lost the key to heaven,

A white heron stands waiting,
gazing at the full moon

as if its heart has missed a beat
연인

5 년 동안 가까스로 금연을 해오다가 문학상 심사를 마치고 한 대 괴우면서 그동안 인생이 수포로 돌아갔다고 후회하는 어느 시인을 옆에서 보면서,

그냥 오랜만에 첫사랑 연인이 죽도록 보고 싶어 그만 그 옛날집 골목으로 끌려가는 마음으로 생각하라 하였다

금연금연이나 금연금연이나 매한가지 아니나고

연연은 끊을 수 없는 연인이라고

Beloved

For 5 years his lungs were smoke free, if only just, until

the day he finished judging a literary award, and lit up a cigarette,

regretting that it was back to the drawing board now.

I looked over at my fellow poet and said,

Just think of it as your first love, who you’ve yearned for all those years,

leading you down the lane to that place of long ago.

Quitting smoking and quitting love are one and the same, are they not, I said;

kismet is a lover who can’t be quit.
무릉 곳자왈

동굴 속에서 목소리가 울려했다
 좀 더 좀 더 올라와
 뿌리가 죽었잖아
 윗 계곡에서도 들려왔다
 말랐잖아
 비 옷 지 너무 오래되었어
 따라 들어가 왼쪽으로
 계속 들어갔다
 계속 들어가
 여기가 거기야
 밖에서 먹구름이 몰려와
 소나비가 되어 동굴입구로 쏟아져 들어왔다
 죽었던 나무뿌리들이 모두 살아나
 먼 바다로 계속 뻗어나갔다
 먼 하늘로
 먼 너에게로
 뿌리들은 닫아오른 제 풍 기둥을 더욱 더더욱
 하늘을 향해 치솟도록 밀어 올렸다
Cheju’s Forest Primeval

Voices echo from the cave,

_Come up a little more_

Voices could be heard from the upper valley too,

_They’ve withered, just as I thought,
It’s been too long since we had rain._
_Follow them in, to the left_

I went farther inside.

_Go farther in,
this is the place_

Outside, dark clouds gathered,

turning into a sudden downpour,
the rain spilling into the mouth of the cave.

The dead roots of the trees come back to life

spreading out to the faraway sea,

towards the distant sky,

towards you.

The roots propelled

columns of water up,

gushing toward the sky.

*On April 3, 1948, South Korean forces launched a counterinsurgency against a leftist uprising on Cheju Island. To root out those suspected of being communists, South Korean police and soldiers laid waste to entire villages in the interior of the island. Many civilians who fled into the caves of Mt. Halla were suspected of being communists, guerillas having already set up camp in the hills. In 1992, the remains of massacred victims were discovered in a cave on Mt. Halla. An estimated 30,000 to 60,000 people were killed.*
폭포

밀리서 번개가 치고
천둥이 울고
드디어 비가 내리면
긴 혀 내밀어
먼 바다의 자궁 속으로 빠져나가곤 했다

Waterfall

lightning strikes from afar
and thunder bellows;
when the rain finally falls
its long tongue slides out,
and would slip out into the womb of the far-off sea
칼

달려오는 저
웃음의 훗바닥을
중천을 넘어가는 낮달의 시린 눈빛이
가슴속에 받아서
품어두는

Knife

Laughter’s tongue

races up to the middle of the sky,
but the daytime moon’s stinging gaze

catches it and

buries it in its bosom
Entwined Roots

Phewa Lake sits beneath the snow-capped Annapurna peaks.

A makeshift store in a village of displaced Tibetans, in the courtyard stands a greybeard - a centuries-old Bodhi tree.

On a night, resplendent with the full moon

To the myriad spirits from afar,

Come inside me,

be thunder and

become lightning, I say;

become the myriad shrieks

her arms flailing somewhere up there,

in the direction of the mid-heavens that cast out the woman inside its body.
그림자

무지개다리를 건너서는데
큰 키로 막아서는 사람 있었는데

선인일까
악령일까

한 번도 할아버지 산소에 가본 적 없네
어느 구름의 족보에도 없었네

무지개 저 넘어가는
대낮
바짝 달라붙어 떨어지지 않는
한 발짝도 밟 수 없는
환한 꽃그늘

Shadow

As I was crossing the rainbow bridge,
I came upon a tall figure blocking my way.

A person of virtue?
A dark spectre?

Not ever going to the family plot to visit grandfather’s grave
Not ever found in any cloud of a genealogy

The midday
that crosses over the rainbow.

The gleaming shadow of the flower
clings for dear life,
feet fused to the ground.
남한강 그 어디쯤

저기
물속을 내려다보면
걸어 다니던
골목들이 아른거린다네

고향을 떠나 서울 가서
아내와 아들 연탄가스 중독으로 잃고

다시 돌아올 수밖에 없었다고 말하는
그
눈길이 아른거리던
잔주름 물결들이네

* 이 시는 충주댐 건설로 수몰된 충북 단양의 어느 마을 이장의 이야기를 변용한 것임.
Somewhere Along the South Han River

When he gazes into the water
there
the alleys that he once strolled
quiver past.

He left his hometown and made for Seoul
there
he lost his wife and son,
poisoned by carbon monoxide fumes.

His
line of sight wavers like
wrinkles on the water:

Where else but home could I go?

*This poem is based on the story of the village head of Tanyang in North Ch’ungch’ŏng Province, a village that disappeared as a result of the flooding of Ch’ungju Dam.
PART 4

동백꽃

제개발 아파트를 기다리며 어머니는
지난겨울 터진 보일러를 새로 놓아드린다 해도
da 허물 텐데
나는 꽤찮다 걱정하지 마라 하신다

환절기 조심하시라 해도
차분 테서 있다가 차분 데로 가는 거는 감기 안 걸린다
너거는 밥 재때 애들하고 까니 거르지 맘고 잘 챙기라

나는 꽤찮다
나는 꽤찮다

내 몸이 보일러다
뜨건 물도 잘도 떠우는 동백꽃이다
라고
Camellia

I tell her I’ll replace the hot water heater that burst last winter.

What’s the use, my Mother says, as she awaits her new apartment,

the whole building’s coming down anyway.

I’m all right, she says, don’t you worry about me.

I tell her to be careful when the seasons change.

You can’t catch a cold, she says, going from one cold place to another,

It’s you and the kids who need your three square meals, and no skipping!

I’m all right
I’m all right
I’m all right

My body is a furnace, she says,

a camellia red enough to boil water.
장마

허리 통증이 점점 아래로 내려오기 시작했다
장마전선이 점점 하강한다고 한다
엉치뼈 부근이 저리고 휴전선 임진강 두루미 가족이 날아왔다다고
석 달 동안 간이침대 누워 살고 있다
자꾸 통증이 남하하기 시작한다
저 남쪽의 깊은 강물에게도 물의 가족이 불어났는지 묻고 싶은 저녁
어머니에게서 아직도 아프냐고 전화가 왔다

Monsoon

Inch by inch the pain in my lower back has started inching downward, and they say that the monsoon front is edging southward.

My sacrum pulses with pain and they say that down by the Imjin River, a flock of red-crowned cranes has flown across the ceasefire line.

I’ve been confined to a hospital bed for three months. The pain keeps on its southward course.

On a night when I wanted to ask the deep waters of the south flowing river if its swells have risen

my mother calls, asking if I’m still in pain.
I wish you wouldn’t fuss over me;
I’m fine, I’m well.

I wish you wouldn’t be fussing so, because I’m in
heaven.

Heaven.

From a matchbox room with a wrinkled floor

Mother phones us –
all the way from home, on this lonely autumn evening
퇴고

저 은사시나무의 척추에는
별들이 숨어 있는 것 같다
어린 저녁별이 사라진 골목의 사타구니 속 검은 통중
우물 속에 빠뜨렸던 술가락
막 임을 벌리는 잎의 처녀 혀
달빛의 첫사랑

죽여 버릴 거야
자작나무도 나에게 속삭였다
사랑을 죽음과도 바꿀 수 있다고
g을바람이 총알도 풀고 있다
천사의 분홍치마폭의
파랑나비

거기 숨어 있는 거 다 알고 있다

Revisions

A constellation hiding along
the silver poplar’s spine

A young evening star, dark ache in the receding alley’s groin

A spoon dropped into a well

A leaf’s mouth widening, its virgin blood spilling out to a bloom

The moonlight’s first love

And the birch tree whispered to me,
I’m going to kill you.
I’ve heard that love can trade places with death,
even a bullet can be concealed in the autumn wind.

A blue butterfly
tucked among the folds of an angel’s pink skirt,

I know all that’s hidden there.
난

머릿속은 텅 비어 구름 한 점 없다
여름 내내 묵 한 번 쳐주지 못한 죄로 무덤 하나 만들어 주면 되겠지 하며
통중 겨우 다스려 연구실 문을 붙잡고 들어서니,
정갈한 옷 그대로 앉아 옷으며 처다보는 것 아닌가
한참 동안 무덤 속 나비들을 모두 날려 보내고서야
허리를 펴고 그 환한 얼굴을 마주볼 수 있었네

Orchid

My head is empty, not even a cloud.

Thinking I could make a grave for it
To atone for not giving it so much as a drop of water all summer long
to wet its lips,

I take hold of the doorknob and step into my office
Scarcely able to tame my pain.

There you sit, smiling as ever, in your Sunday best

Only after some time, after shooing away all the butterflies in your grave,
can I straighten up and greet your glowing face.
한반도

Because of you, I don’t think I can carry on.

Night upon night, sleeping with their backs turned,

the full moon, high in the heavens
takes hold a hand each, clasps them together and

finally – disarmament.

The pregnant moon at full term.
아침아슬

잊혀져 버리리라
한평생 눈을 마주치고 함께 살아온
눈초롱꽃의 눈동자 그 눈짓 밖으로
멀리
아주 멀리
아무도 기억할 수 없는 사람에게로 가서

Morning Dew

It will all be forgotten.
Lives entwined,
its life starts eye to eye with the bellflower’s iris –
and from that outer ring, it

drifts far,
far off
toward someone nobody will remember.
무지개에게

다시는 울지 마라
사랑했다고도 다시 죽는다고도 소리치지 마라
먹구름 속 숨어서도
그 얼굴 보이지 마라
다시는 입을 열지 마라
죄를 썻고 다시 가벼워진 입술이 되기까지

To the Rainbow

Don’t ever cry again.
Never again cry out that you once loved and will die again.

Don’t show your face
Even as you hide in the mass of dark clouds

Don’t open your mouth
Until you have atoned for your sins
And your lips grow lighter once again.
밥상

어느 날 봄날이었던가 왕산 아래 금서초등학교 운동장을 둘러 안고 있던 큰 할머니 같은 벚나무들이 제 가솔을 먹이느라 줄지어 그 긴 평룩 위에다 밥상을 차려놓았던,

운동장에서 아침 조회시간 아침에 쌀밥 먹고 온 학생손들고 나오라고 했던 그 봄날 아침, 무심결 찬밥으로 먹고 나온 흰 밥알의 눈알들이 보고 있다는 얼떨결 생각에 그만 적요한 대열 앞으로 나섰다가,

입을 벌리고 벗어졌던 꽃잎이 되었네

Dinner Table

I think it was a spring day beneath Mount Wang when the lofty grandmother cherry blossom trees that surround the playground of Kŭmsŏ Elementary School in single file laid out a table of food on their long forearms to feed their families...

It was on that spring morning during outdoor assembly, when the students were asked, *those of you who had rice for breakfast before coming to school, raise your hand and come forward.* Without thinking in that moment, having eaten cold rice, I simply stepped forward into the lonely line, then with the sudden thought that those white kernels of eyes were staring at me,

with my mouth agape, I unraveled into a fallen petal.
경호강

나는 지리산 방곡리에서 마을 사람들 거울 눈밭으로 마을 회의 한단고
집결시켜놓고 총살하는 광경을 숨어서 지켜보았다는 화계리 시인의 이야기를 들었다
대대로 이어받은 조상들의 눈바닥 위에서 그 흰 몸 위에 피를 쏟으며 죽어갔다는
양민학살 기록을 겨울도 숨 넘어가지 못하는 봄 천릿꽃 필 무렵 보았다

나는 협율이 모두 총탄 소리에 맞서 죽어간 그 쏟아진 희들 모아서 저문 강물은
그들의 육신이 되어 몸을 뒤틀이다가 거울 눈 내리는 날이면 그 눈발 속이 속이를
고이 받아 안으며 가슴을 들어 올리는 얼음을 바닥의 얼굴을 보기도 했었다

나는 열세 살 어느 소년이 아버지의 아버지, 어머니의 어머니가 겨울 눈밭에서
죽어가는 손짓으로 멀리 멀리 아주 멀리 도망가라고 꺼져가는 손짓을 내丟는 눈빛을
멀리 보며 총탄에 맞은 다리로 삼십 리 길을 끝고 빠져나와 살아났다는 이야기도
들었다
**Kyŏngho River**

I heard a story about the people of Panggok Village in the Mt. Chiri area from a poet from Hwagye-ri who said, ‘I hid and saw them summon the villagers for a meeting out on the snowy fields. Once they were all gathered, I saw them being slaughtered right before my eyes.’ I read the record of this brutish massacre of these innocents, their white bodies lying atop the ancestral rice paddies they had tilled for generations, as spring azaleas blossomed even with winter’s breath still in the air.

Flesh and blood rupturing in the crackle of gunfire, their streams of blood pooled together as the dark twilight river, coiling and twisting, became their flesh and body, and on winter days when snow was falling, I saw their faces in the icy ground, its chest rising and taking into its embrace the pooled clusters of snowflakes.

I also heard the story of a thirteen-year-old boy who, when his father’s father and his mother’s mother’s dying gestures on that snowy field told him to run far, far, and farther away, dragged his bullet-ravaged leg for thirty li and escaped, chased from behind by their fading gestures and eyes.

*Thirty li is about a three hour walk, or fifteen kilometres.*

*This poem is about the Sanch’ŏng and Hamyang massacre of 1951. With many North Korean soldiers fleeing and hiding in the hills of Mt. Chiri in South Kyŏngsang Province, South Korean security forces, under one of the clearest direct order of sanctioned political genocide, killed 705 unarmed civilians – most were women and children.*
지리산 그 어느 아래

단풍으로 제 몸을 활짝 벌려
그 허리춤 무덤들에서부터 화계장터 막장에까지 그 넓은 아랫도리를 벗어놓은
그곳

그해 그 이듬해까지
아랫도리가 근질근질한 강물 가까이 한반도의 평평한
엉덩이가 되어

평평 자식 같은 산봉우리를 밀어내는
그곳

Beneath Mount Chiri

There’s a place,
autumn foliage fanning out, its body swelled open
and from the graves at its waist to the far reaches of the Hwagye market grounds
nude from the waist down.

A place,
from that year until the following year,
nearing the raring river, the lower torso becomes our Peninsula’s flat bottom

Pushing out clusters of rounded summits like its own children
O, that place.
Why?

Standing against the rapids
a heron
by its lonely self.

Why?

Why?

it cries out to the oblivious crowd
Head cocked,
it strides through mid-air.
귀향

임진각 망배단에서
103 세 할아버지가
104 세 할아버지지를 깨안으며

형님,
죽는 날까지
북녘 하늘 우러러보면서
건강하게 삽시다,
형님!

함께
저 떠날 때까지

서로 꽉 깨안고 다짐하면서
백로 날아가는 북녘하늘 바라보고 서 있네

Homeward Bound

At Imjin Pavilion, a place to grieve those separated

A 103-year-old embraces his

104-year-old friend,

My dear friend,

until the day we’re no more

let’s look out toward the northern sky and

live long and healthy lives,

dear brother!

Until the day they cross that sky

there they stand,

in each other’s reaffirming embrace,

looking at the herons in the northern sky.
박수근

눈이 내려도
폭우가 쏟아져도
무지개가 넘나들어도

분단이다

휴전이 되자
큰 장독에 그 많은 그림을 넣어두고
넘어왔다고 했다

Pak Sugūn

The snows fall
The rains rail down
And rainbows hover above

Yet still the land is divided

As soon as the ceasefire was declared, he said,
I placed a stack of my paintings in a large earthenware pot
and crossed over.

* Pak Sugūn, a renowned painter of pastoral images, was born in 1914 in Kangwŏn Province and moved to Pyŏngyang before the Korean war. With the outbreak of the war, Pak’s home was constantly surveilled and he was frequently arrested and interrogated by communist forces. He fled to the South where he continued to paint scenes of agrarian life.
PART 5

Shoes

The shoes that I trudged around in the ventricular alleyways

By the Hindu temple at Durbar Square in Kathmandu,

Those shoes –

I hung outside the window, beneath the windy sky

So that the wind could breathe in and out on them,

So that the clouds could float down and play.

So that the grizzled snowcapped peaks could glance down on them.
Hilltop Grave

My entire life
on the edge of a cliff.
Fierce waves and
a dark fog
orbit and coil about me.

I must pick myself up again.
I must pick myself up again.

A cloud wipes away my tears.
미궁
어디서 바람의 소문에 실려 온 꽃잎들
창문에 열굴을 뒤고 떫어져라
나를 들여다본다

저놈들, 에미를 떠나와
미색에 빠져 기웃거리다가
미궁에 빠지겠지

나도 대여섯 살 무렵
삼천포 앞바다 비단 폭에 빠져
떠밀려서 저녁이 되도록 길을 잃고 죽을 뻔했다

이놈들아, 빨리 돌아가

Labyrinth

Petals riding the wind’s whispers from somewhere
put their faces to the window
and peer intently at me.

Those boys, they’ve left their mums;
Suckers for a fair face, if they’re not careful
their gawking will get them pulled into the labyrinth

When I was not quite six
I fell into the swirling folds of the Samch’ŏnp’o sea;
Lost and adrift until evening, I nearly drowned.

You boys, hurry home.
학여울

오체투지로 개울을 거슬러 올라가는
등용문 아래 양어 베타들을
낮달이 멀리서 내려다보고 있다
집으로 가던 걸음을 멈추고
용을 쓰고 있네

Hangnyŏul, Seoul

Shoals of carp below the dragon gate
bow one after the other as they struggle upstream.
The moon at day pauses on its way home
and strains to look,
labouring from on high.

*According to Chinese mythology, the Dragon Gate is located at the top of a waterfall on the Yellow River; successful carp that swim upstream against the current transform into dragons. The Dragon Gate is usually referenced when one’s great efforts and diligence result in an upward movement in life.
한평생

모나코황나비는
태양의 눈빛이 때를 알려줄 때까지 기다렸다가
수컷이 암컷을 나무에서 떼어내어 짝짓기를 하고
태양의 유전자가 알려주는 대로
머나먼 여정을 떠나
푸른 하늘이 무덤인 줄 알면서도,

크리스마스섬의 붉은개는
달빛에 발목을 더욱 가까이 들어올려
알을 멀리 너의 바다로 날려 보내고,

항목고래는 평생 동안 2백만 킬로미터를 횡단하고.

Birth to Death

The monarch butterfly
waits until it receives the knowing glance from the sun.
The male pairs off with the female, tearing her away from the tree and
follows the sun’s genetic map;
knowing that its grave is the azure sky,
it leaves on its journey.

The Christmas Island red crab
sends off its eggs to your faraway side of the sea,
lifting its ankles closer to the moonlight.

And the gray whale crisscrosses two million kilometres of ocean in a lifetime.
시

왜 시비를 걸어와서
왜 귀때기를 때리는데
배추흰나비 날게 하는가
왜 돌무덤 속에 옷을 벗어놓게 하는가

Poem

Why did you pick a fight,
and smack me upside the head?
To send the white butterfly aloft?
Why do you make me strip off my clothes in this stone grave?
사막

 붓은여우가 지나간다

죽은 비처럼

저녁노을의 훗기침처럼

슬픔과 기쁨 사이의

긴 침묵처럼

뜨겁게

Desert

A red fox lopes by,

Blistering.

Like dried up rain,

Like the evening glow clearing its throat,

Like the long silence

between sadness and happiness.

탑, 책을 읽다
창녕 술정리 삼층석탑
보름달이 뜨면
발꿈치를 들고 몸속 기러기들을 다 날려 보내고
우포늪 갈대숲이나
관룡사 처마를 밋새 돌다가
세벽이 되면 돌아와
서서 책을 읽는다네

The Pagoda, Reading

When the full moon rises,
The three-story stone pagoda in Sulchŏng-ri, Ch’angnyŏng
Stands up on its tiptoes and sends aloft the geese from inside its stony torso.

All through the night it roams the reed fields of U’po Marsh or
the eaves of Kwallyong Temple,
Returning by dawn –
see how it stands, reading the leaves of a book
Nail Not

Don’t give that look;
And utter not a word –
Whether to the breasts of the stars
Or to the shadows of the wind.
On May 17, 1980, to gain clearance from the censor’s office, I carried the galley proofs of my university newspaper up to the left of the 1st floor of the red brick building in the alley in Chŏngdong off Sŏsomun Blvd in Seoul that houses the Shina Daily News when I saw the emergency dispatch spilling out of the cramped foreign press telex office—“500 Civilians Slaughtered in Kwangju, Tanks Roll into Chungangch’ŏng Square”—the blood drained from my body and everything went black.

Was it then, twenty years ago?

The current of the upper reaches of the South River as it runs along Mt. Chiri in Chungsan-ri was calling me, and the royal azaleas on the cliffs on the far side bloomed so enticing, that I once nearly drowned in its swelling embrace.
유신헌법 철폐하라고 매일 집회가 있었던
1974 년 5 월
금호동 골목
경북여인숙에서 열흘을 보냈다

사복형사들이 해장국을 먹으러 갔다는
손짓 너머 새벽

물레 한강 강변으로
감시망을 빠져나와

그 다음날까지
그 몇 날 전까지

해가 지기를 기다리며
죄 없이 강물은 흘러가고 있었다

그 다음 다음날
대학 휴교령이 내렸다
A Day Goes By

In May of 1974, when there were daily rallies calling to repeal the Yushin Constitution, I spent ten days at the Kyŏngbuk Inn in Kŭmho-dong.

The plain clothes police officers left to grab a bowl of haejang stew, and with the signal that the coast was clear, on that dawn,

I stole out to the Han River, slipping through their surveillance net.

Until the next day and for several more,

I waited for the sun to set while the river waters flowed blithely by.

And two days later, they closed down the universities.
개울물소리

검고 마른
계곡을 타고 내려간다
안개에 휩싸였다
그 깊고 깊은
숨을 몰아쉬면서
먼 바다에게 닿기 위해
밤새 말라가는 목소리로 외쳐도
응답이 없던
강물 어귀에서 머리를 부딪칠 뿐

Sounds of the Brook

It courses down the
sooty, parched valley,
engulfed by the fog.
Inhaling and exhaling deep drafts of air
to reach the far-off sea,
it calls out all night in its sapping voice, but
there is no reply.
At the river’s mouth
all it can do is beat its head.
예순 살 즈음에

봄날의 오후 창 오래된 연인들처럼 비가 내렸다
한 달에 한 번이라도 서로 만나 안부나 묻고
살아가는 채무라도 함께 나누자는 절실히 모임 끝나고
커피는 관절에 좋지 않는 말에 다들 녹차라페를 시킨다
사십 년 인연을 만갈에 끌을 수 없어 2 천 원 할인해준다는 아메리카노를 시켰다

그 푸른따름 깊은 날에는 아메리카, 아메리카 하면 증오와 분노의 감정이 담장에 붙은 얼굴 내미는 장미보다 더 들끓었는데

이제는 2 천 원에 할인해준다는 아메리카노를 습관적으로 주문하는 봄날 창밖이 흐리다

그까짓 5 천 원이나 8 천 원 하는 이름도 참 기억나지 않는 무슨 라페나 생파일주스는 스쳐 지나왔던 인연보다 더 낯설어졌다.

관절이 더욱 저려오는 통증을 참고 그 푸른 깊은 날의 증오의 아메리카노를 2 천 원에 마시며 비 내리는 오후를 서로의 얼굴에 늘어가는 감미었처럼 내리는 빗줄기를 한없이 마주 바라본다

세시가 넘어서자 지난해 명예퇴직하고 아파트 폐수를 줄여 화장실로 물러났다고 하던 이군이 먼저 저녁에 아들식구들이 오기로 했다고 자리를 뜨자 재일 먼저 머느리 본다고 몇 년 전 자랑했던 김건도 손자가 유아원에서 돌아올 시간이라고 자리를 뜨다 인천에서 오늘 연인들 모임 코가 빠지게 기다렸다고 능청辄녕 정군도

아들 내외 대신 아파트 반상회 참석해야 벌금 안 내다고 뒤따라 일어서고 하나 들썩 자리를 펼게대고 떠났다
고등학교 대학교 동창인 박군이 어디로 갈거냐고 물어왔다
날 혼자 두고 갈 평계가 궁색해보여
나도 약속이 있어서 그만, 하고
대답하자, 내 말 땅에 떨어지기 전에
넬 골프 약속 때문에 연습장 가야한다고 서둘러 가는
뒷모습을 바라보며
그렇지 약속

나도 나하고 약속이 있었지 되뇌며
모두들 떠나고 빈 잔만 남은 자리를 떠나
창가로 자리를 옮겨 나와 마주앉았다
아주 오래된 연인처럼 나와 마주앉아
의자들 당겨 봉비와 대화를 나누었다
창밖 길바닥에 떨어지는 빗방울이며,
너희 둥근 얼굴이며

주룽주룽 동무되어 내려앉는 너희 몸동작이며
가장자리로 튀어오르는 너희 눈웃음이며
모두가 아주 오래된 가슴속의 연인들처럼
어깨를 기대며 내리는 창밖에 서서
나를 오래 참고 기다려 주는 너희들
아주 고맙다

어느새 봄날 비 내리는 오후 저녁이 되었다
서로 얼굴도 모르고 내리던 빗방울 낮설어도
서로 약수를 하고 혈어지며 비는 계속 내렸다

In Our Sixties
One afternoon spring day, rain came down like old sweethearts. Meeting as we did, at least once a month to check in and share moments of happiness with each other, and after our lunch, telling ourselves *coffee’s not good for the joints*, we all order a round of green teas, but it’s hard to break a 40-year lover’s bond with one swift stroke and with the offer of a 2,000 won discount, we change our order to Americanos instead.

America, America, back when we were the greenest of green youth, those words would incite hatred and fury, hotter even than the flushed faces of roses pushing their way up walls.

But now on this spring day as the sky clouds over outside the window, out of habit we order the 2,000 won discounted Americanos.

Those over-priced fruit juices and lattes with the names that are impossible to remember – names that are becoming more unfamiliar than fleeting past lovers.

We put up with the growing aches in our joints as we drink our discounted Americanos that once fueled hatred in us in our greener days, and we sit facing the rainy afternoon, watching the streams of rain mushroom down like the liver spots on our faces.

As soon as the clock chimes three, after lamenting to us of downsizing to a smaller apartment and being driven into the outskirts after his forced retirement last year, Yi is the first to stand up, adding that his son’s family is coming for dinner.

Then follows Kim, who, a few years ago, was the first among us to boast that he would be welcoming a daughter-in-law to his family. Getting to his feet, he says it’s around the time that his grandchild returns home from preschool.

And then all the way from Inch’ŏn, Chŏng, who had remarked disingenuously earlier how eagerly he had been waiting for today’s Bosom Buddies Club, follows suit and gets to his feet, saying he has to play proxy for his son and daughter-in-law at their strata board meeting or else they’ll have to pay a fine. Doling out one excuses after the other, they all leave.

Pak, a classmate from both high school and university, asks me if I have somewhere to be. His excuse for leaving me here alone was all too transparent, so I say, *Well, I’ve got to get going too,* But before the words are barely out of my mouth, he rushes out saying, *I’ve got to get to the driving range before hitting the green tomorrow.* and as I watch him leave,

That’s right! I have plans Plans. Plans with myself, I repeat,
as I move from the empty table, strewn with wasted paper cups, to a table next to the window, facing myself. Pulling my chair forward, sitting face to face like two old lovers, I share a conversation with the spring rain.

O Raindrops, you fall on the street outside my window, your round faces, the sway of your bodies streaming down, converging as companions, the twinkle in your eyes as you splatter on the ledges - you are all like old bosom friends. As I lean against the rain-streaked window, I’m so very grateful that You have waited for me, oh-so patiently.

The rainy spring afternoon had suddenly become evening. Strangers as they were and as unfamiliar as they were to each other, the raindrops parted with a handshake, and the rain kept falling.
그날 밤 별들은 오순도순 어린 내게
많은 이야기를 들려주었다

살아간다는 건 서로의 가슴에서
어둠을 거내 빛나게 하는 것이라고
서로의 눈이 되어 함께 걸어가는 것이라고

죄를 쫓고 한없이 흘러가는 물결 속
조약돌처럼 사는 것이라고

A Leaf Blows My Way

The stars that night gently
told stories to a young me, saying,

In life, we reach in to our hearts,
pulling out darkness and turning it to light.
In life, we become each other’s eyes and
walk together.

Living in the endless current, we are the pebble,
being smoothed of our faults.

침묵 너머로
Beyond Silence

The autumn evening across and beyond
that counters all rebuttals
must be the afterlife of flowers.
영취산 올라가는 입구 드나들기 늘어선 가게들 옆 염소 두 마리가 너무 배가 고픈지 좋이를 씹어 되새김질하고 있는데, 함께 들어서던 장옥관 시인이 시를 써고 있는 것이라고 하는 말이 흉가를 스쳐는데 나는 속으로 경전을 되새김질하는 것이겠지 생각하였다.

법화경을 처음 설법했다는 바위 사원을 돌고 돌아 내려 오는 계단 양쪽으로 손을 벌리며 걸려 있는 릴다를 지나 처 오는데 염소 두 마리가 물끄러미 아주 오래된 할머니의 눈빛으로 나를 읽고 있는 것이었다.

Sacred Pages

Beside the scattered stalls at the entrance of Yŏngch’wi Mountain, two goats, starving no doubt, chew on paper; when I overhear the poet Chang Okkwan, who stepped in with me, say they’re ruminating on a poem, I think to myself they’re more likely ruminating on a sacred sutra.

Taking a turn ‘round the rock temple where the Lotus Sūtra was first preached, and as we pass the prayer flags that reach out like outstretched arms, hanging along both sides of the steps back down the mountain, the two goats, with the blank stares of an old, old grandmother, look right into me, reading my soul.
눈보라 내리는 초원의 언덕 아래 웅덩이 속에서
추위와 굶주림을 몰아간 들소 한 마리 그만 폭 쓰러진다
뒤를 따르던 무리들이 둘러서서 얼굴을 들이대고 깨워본다
아무리 눈보라 속을 뚫고 깨우려 해도 움직이지 않는다
끝까지 그 곁을 돌며 옷으로 발과 얼굴을 부벼대며 자리를 떠나지 못하고 있다

Family

A blizzard swirls over the grasslands, and in a puddle by the bottom of a hill,
an ox, resigned to frost and starvation, gives up and falls over.
The herd in tow circles around, nudging it with their heads to wake it up.
Try as they might to vanquish the snowstorm and wake it up, it lies still.
They circle around to the bitter end rubbing their entire bodies against its head and hooves
never leaving its side.
이 깊은 밤,
 혼자서
 먹먹히
 백속의 나를
 한평생 바라보다가
 더욱 외로워져서
 이 별에서 저 별로 건너가서
 서로의 무덤이 되어 꾸안는 것이라고

**Falling Star**

On this late night,
alone,
a void folded into its chest,
for a lifetime it watches me –
me enclosed within walls
and when it grows ever more lonesome,
it crosses over from this star to that star

becoming each other’s graves, and falling into each other’s embrace.
Then let me die, too.

I’m getting old and
piercing sadness though I may have,

I have no tears
for the murderous intentions I harbor.

I went to heaven, but was brought back to life
And have stayed on this earth for a time.
Please unplug me now.
Between the Sky and the Heavens

You,

I did not know that
you would grow wings and
fly into my heart,
only to die.

But
there is no grave
to bury you in.
해의 심장이 두근거리며 뛰고 있을 때
사랑의 이름으로
말을 잃고 점점 식어갈 때
멀리서 너의 심장이 햇살로 고통지고 있을 때

At Dusk

When the heart of the sun beats, pulsing and racing
in the name of love,
When you forget the words and wither away,
When threads of sunlight stitch your heart from miles away.
구름의 몸에서
번뇌가 번쩍일 때
천둥이 울릴 때
마지막 절규가 들릴 때
말라가던 개울의 입술이
그 바다에 닿을 때
저녁 바다가 기뻐서 소리칠 때

Ears Open

From within the cloud’s mass,
when agony strikes like lightning,
when thunder deafens
and the last shriek is heard,
when the parched lips of the brook
reach the sea,
when the evening sea squeals in delight
Aging

Like threads of sunlight passing between us

– the river flows, aging naturally.

Never forgetting along its way to convey the mountain ridge’s winter regards in the form of the snow blossoms in its bosom, to

the evening camellias basking on the dusky bluff of yon shore.