

Adieu !

(Trần Nghi Âu Cơ)

Her yellow dress swayed
like a tired daffodil
as she spun under the rain.

Water dripped down her face
and bled in with her tears.

She collapsed into the embrace of
the earth, catching the final pearls
of rain in her palm

and whispered into the wind,
vĩnh biệt !

(Mar. 14/2010)

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Remembrance

(Trần Nghi Âu Cơ)

More than the kids
who wear *what the pho* shirts
and hang out at Little Saigon.
More than the smiling history professors
who preach about the evils
of Ngô Đình Diệm while adjusting their
tiny bifocals.
More than the “patriotically” Hollywood films
and historic memoirs--

I know the anger.

I know the drunken Vietnamese vet who,
after spitting at the feet of passing pedestrians
in indignant anger, was arrested by the government
from whom he sought protection.
I know the long lines at the social service offices
full of formerly richly sophisticated families, now
forced to stand in modern day breadlines.

I know the twenty five year old Vietnamese-American
who speaks no word of Vietnamese.

I know of experiences unseen.
The lives unlived.

I see a warped history
waiting to be corrected.
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Bé

(Trần Nghi Âu Cơ)

A single syllable,
delivered by the chapped lips
of a smiling stranger,
vibrates my ear drums
and rests on the tip of my brain.

It perches there for a moment,
then gracefully spirals down
the inner tunnel of my body
like a twirling ballerina,
much too dizzy to expel the sprinkling stars
from the wallpaper of her mind.

I've searched all corners of every library
and looked through the deepest cellars of every bookstore
only to realize that—

there is no English equivalent.

(Autumn 2008)

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