

Daryl Qilin Yam



**Drain Circling, A While Ago**

*For John Taylor Funeral Service, Leamington Spa*

1

John Taylor: tell me you caught a glimpse  
of that streak across the sky

or perhaps I am delusional, John Taylor;  
perhaps I am simply seeing things

but John Taylor, reassure me  
that although the dead are right round

the corner, you still believe in water,  
John Taylor, and its passage across

the blue space above you, the white light  
clear and radiant above your service.

Have faith, John Taylor. I say that to myself  
all the same, John Taylor. I say it now.

2

The smell of rain this early evening  
suspended in the air. Just water.

Daryl Qilin Yam. 'Drain Circling, A While Ago'.  
*Transnational Literature* Vol.10 no.1, November 2017.  
<http://fhrc.flinders.edu.au/transnational/home.html>

It is half past six, and the sky is grey  
though light. Earlier this morning

two men came, and repainted  
the old tables in the courtyard.

Now there is water on the new paint.  
Somewhere the sound of straw

scrubbing against a dirty floor;  
somewhere near and yet I cannot see.

(Tonight my window  
will remain open.)

3

It rains in the dark, John Taylor.  
I sit by my window and,

on top of smelling the rainfall,  
I listen to its harmonies

played in the courtyard. John Taylor  
tell me you hear its music:

the blue be-bop. Tambourine.  
Tom-tom. All you can see of me

is a narrow bar of light  
in the gap between the curtains.

John Taylor, John Taylor, my 10 p.m. suitor  
pray me you dancer

4

Hey John. It's been a while.  
I've tasted freedom but it was raining all week

and so I could not meet you  
even if I wanted to.

Yesterday we had sunshine, briefly  
and this morning, again, the illusion:

a red-leaved tree, overlooking the courtyard,  
and a circle of seagulls

casting illusions over George Street.  
I had a friend named George, once.

Does he care for me. Will I care  
for you. Shall anything happen, another time.

*Daryl Qilin Yam*