

The BA (Hons) in English Language & Literature and
BEd (Hons) in English Language Teaching presents

'If by dull rhymes our English must be
chain'd...' (John Keats)

Connexion:

A Poetic Ensemble

Summer 2009



Hong Kong Baptist University

Contents

Prologue		2
Birthday Candle	Dr Stuart CHRISTIE	3
In her Eyes	PERVEEN Amina	5
Recollection of a Kinder Party	Dr CHOI Tat Heung	7
The Naming of Frank	Dr CHOI Tat Heung	8
To Love	HEUNG Airlie Maria	9
Flights of Love	CHEUNG Ka Man Fiona	11
Muse	IP Tai Fu Vincent	12
A Solitary Night in Cork	CHU Wun Yin Frank	13
The Best	CHU Wun Yin Frank	14
Epilogue		15

Prologue

O, we have made a vow to study, lords,
And in that vow we have forsworn our books.
For when would you, my liege, or you, or you,
In leaden contemplation have found out
Such fiery numbers as the prompting eyes
Of beauty's tutors have enriched you with?

(Love's Labour's Lost, William Shakespeare)



Birthday Candle

By Dr Stuart CHRISTIE

for 林淨衡

A candle you cannot blow out.
Wax you cannot yet feel
 too hot. Even when cool,
a candy you cannot eat.

Once a year, my child, every year.
Your spring chastens my autumn.
A first October: you have only seen
one set of seasons.

O lucky seasons! They will know and love your
 laughing flowers,
 parasol against midday sweat,
 plucked apart falling leaves,
 (I wish there were snow for you to see).

O lucky seasons! To know and love you,
 even when I am gone.
You will be here: I frame my wish.

A blessed here. Right here
 where we are.

You grasp my hand and all once fleeting
 becomes permanent.

Except you.

The candle must burn.
 must melt,
and every October, we must celebrate
 this pressed-button fact
of your being.

(You press and the toy, my heart, sings.)

Come, my child! Come! Let us be young
together. It is your life I am living now.
I am forty and you are one.
And today the best birthday I've ever had, ever could have.
Ever will have. Until next year.

Your candle shall burn.

I make this wish.
I blow out the candle.



Resonance

I could still recall how I was first mesmerized by the charmingly sweet smile of this baby girl (林淨衡). So much has she captivated my heart that I cannot help speaking passionately about her angelic face every now and then, as if she were my most beloved possession. The vibrancy of youth is able to radiate and reach all those tender souls and hearts such as mine... (CHEUNG Ka Man Fiona)

In her Eyes

By PERVEEN Amina

Sitting on the floor she was
With tiny cups and saucers... making tea.
'Aba... o... Aba... again you are sleeping?'
Eyes frowning, lips pouting,
Two little hands tugging a sleeve,
Dozing was he in the warm morning
With a newspaper in his hand.

'Taste the tea,' commanded she,
Tea made of imaginary ingredients.
Pride in her eyes,
Sweat glistening on the forehead.
He sips the tea,
While she hovers like a hen over her chick.

'Hurry up, Aba, we will go to the market,'
excitedly says she.
He smiles...
Hand in hand they wander to the garden.
Picking lots of different leaves,
Pebbles and earth lovingly, to cook for her... son,
In her small pots and pans.

'Aba... oh... Aba, can't you sit still?'
Now serving earth rice, pebble meat and leafy vegetables
On a plate taken from Ami's treasure.

'After lunch, we will go to the beach.'
Thinking of going out now she,
Different coloured dirt and dust,
Made a rainbow on her dress.

Loving smiles... from her... son...
Sea is not far,
She runs against the wind barefoot,
Laughing and giggling all the while,
Sitting on Aba's lap,

Confessing made-up stories,
Where princes and princesses,
Goblins and wizards are one,
Burrowing in the sweet spicy smell.

Aged eyes, showing only love for her,
Tracing short curly hair,
Covering the innocent face,
Soon she falls asleep,
Tiny hands in big ones.

She snuggles in his bosom and hears his steady heartbeat,
Her anchor,
Slowly going down the horizon, the sun,
Dusk setting in,
A beautiful fragrance engulfing them.
Years pass by, slowly... very slowly,
Her son Aba,
Forever her son Aba.



Resonance

Amina mesmerizes us with her exotic imagery, and yet we are not baffled for she delicately weaves it into every little girl's fantasy. The sweetness seeps out the poem, empowering the apple of his eye to become his forever protector. Thank you, Amina, for putting what I want to say to my dad into words. (SIU Jeannette)

Recollection of a Kinder Party

By Dr CHOI Tat Heung

for Eorthe

Prelude

'A poet can survive everything but a misprint.' (Oscar Wilde)
- and I only hope that any misprints will escape notice...

Had I been a wordsmith in my prime,
I'd have forged my poesy more sublime,
Or rather embellished a great find,
When my exacting mind's not confined.

This pic that enamelled the Kinder night
Should be read in an inward, candid light;
For when you look on each resembling eye,
You'll recollect their enviable pride.



Resonance

The delicacy of your poesy never fails to send the readers back
to the earlier joyance, or further augment the bliss - should
you say your prime is past, would your exacting mind suffer
too much of humility? (IP Tai Fu Vincent)

The Naming of Frank

By Dr CHOI Tat Heung

Fondly are you known to me,
Rayed us with your pleasant glee,
As good heaven makes of thee.
Never a dun word you'd seed;
Knots of meaning we foresee.



Resonance

Dr Choi, you are, as always, so apt with your gentle expression of fondness for students who are dear to you. So frank, indeed, is such poetic utterance that it becomes edifying; in the sense that it liberates one's mind to embrace sentiments and never be reticent with expression, in particular that of affections. Your kindness has been to us an enamouring inspiration for higher pursuits and you are, through and through, the connexion we share, as students of this wondrous institute we call 'home'. (LAM Ze Min Muriel)

To Love

By HEUNG Airlie Maria

To love and be loved,
How beautiful.
Alas, how many can have that?

Some may have the privilege to choose,
To love or be loved.

To love,
To give unconditionally,
To give all your heart,
Resembling the eternal sun,
the restless ocean...

To be loved,
To be indulged and pampered in your lovers'
embrace, care-taking and support...

I have no privilege to have the beauty of the duet,
But I cannot chuse.

I chuse to sing my own song – my song,
called 'To Love'.

To love,
To love the little things in life,
To love my work,
To love even people I don't know –
to sing to the innocent toddlers in Africa,
to write and inspire generations...

In the name of Love!



Resonance

'To Love' summons up a book 'L'amant' written by Marguerite Duras. If we merely define love as 'love between lovers', to love and to be loved are perhaps the most blissful things in the world; but should we confine the essence of L-O-V-E to romantic relationships? Airlie's song wonderfully recollects the footprints of love, as a way to appreciate life on her path to happiness... (FAN Chi Ngan Frances)

Flights of Love

By CHEUNG Ka Man Fiona

When I was plain and small,
I dreamt of a prince sprightly and tall,
Steadfastly he galloped through a moor,
Till he gently reached me in a tor.

When I was young and bright,
The wise boy next door was a delight –
Stirring, spellbound and in soft surprise –
With good morrows seemingly in sight.

Now I am but green still,
Those heart-thumping feelings in time kill;
And when my endearment feels and spills,
A wheelbarrowful of love soon fills.



Resonance

Life goes full circle, but love does not. That is why love is glamorous and overwhelming. Time and again, you waver, but you cannot avoid pressing ahead with your innermost thoughts of finding your true love in life. It may take no time to fall in love, but it undoubtedly takes years to know what love is. It takes some fears to make you trust, and it inexorably takes tears to make it rust. 'Dreaming, getting spellbound and delighted' somehow go full circle intangibly to make life so wonderful. (KUNG Wai Lun Victor)

Muse

By IP Tai Fu Vincent

Solemnly it stands alone on stage,
In black, and a sombre tone.
No one in vicinity –
But the souls of the maestros linger.

Gently soothed by the spotlight,
Its back lid projects towards the ceiling –
Such a gem of magnificence!

Agreeable are the svelte black and thick white keys,
Complementary yet contrasting,
In splendid arrangement and neatness –
How coldly perfect my Muse is!

If closely examined,
A myriad of tiny scratches can be witnessed –
Such an evidence of humanity!

Silence's pirouetting,
Till my striking a dissonant chord;
Miraculously, it resonates so enchantingly,
And applause kicks silence out of the hall.



Resonance

Musing about muse – to my delight, the music from Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943), whether of grave nostalgia or leaping happiness, is a divine intervention bidding work. I imagine you, Vincent, 'striking a dissonant chord', contemplating its miraculous resonance over the 'myriad of tiny scratches' – beauty is there... (Dr CHOI Tat Heung)

A Solitary Night in Cork

By CHU Wun Yin Frank

Grab a bottle of wine,
Yonder the Irish skies,
Kiss the Blarney, close thy eyes,
The beauty of Cork never lies.

Poet's note

It was three days after my debate matches had come to an end. While my mates were partying away, I was staying in writing postcards that wintry evening. In search of divine intervention, I tried my hand at my first poem ever in life. Cork's grey façades, peaceful feel, and friendly, passionate souls glow in my recollection...



Resonance

Flee thee the teeming fête –
 vacate the exuberance.
Under yon skies, meditate –
 entres the sound of silence.

(TAM Eugene Shun Yung)

The Best

By CHU Wun Yin Frank

Benevolent teachers take pride **Herein**,
Ease minds and hearts on subjects **Keen**,
Shakespeare, Wordsworth of no man **Beats**,
To inspire, not to yield, is Baptist **Unique**.



Resonance

When the scale of fineness becomes a dictatorial ranking, life is nothing more than kitsch. Assuredly, though, there are the exceptional few, who reckon fulfilment in their very hearts, not in the marketplace. It is no surprise to read my thoughts in Frank's best words, knowing that genuine souls forgather at HKBU. (NG Sin Ting Queenie)

Epilogue

When pre-pubescent I felt
that moorlands and woodlands were sacred:
people seemed rather profane.

Thus, when I started to verse,
I presently sat at the feet of
Hardy and *Thomas* and *Frost*.

Falling in love altered that,
now Someone, at least, was important:
Yeats was a help, so was *Graves*.

Then, without warning, the whole
Economy suddenly crumbled:
there, to instruct me, was *Brecht*.

Finally, hair-raising things
that Hitler and Stalin were doing
forced me to think about God.

Why was I sure they were wrong?
Wild Kierkegaard, *Williams* and *Lewis*
guided me back to belief.

Now, as I mellow in years
and home in a bountiful landscape,
Nature allures me again.

Who are the tutors I need?
Well, *Horace*, adroitest of makers,
beeking in Tivoli, and

Goethe, devoted to stones,
who guessed that – he never could prove it –
Newton led Science astray.

Fondly I ponder You all:
without You I couldn't have managed
even my weakest of lines.

(A Thanksgiving, W.H. Auden)



A pocket poetry book to collect and to cherish.

‘A word is a bud attempting to become a twig...’ (Gaston Bachelard) – in this poetic ensemble, you will find many buds, some sprouting into elegant twigs and others into gorgeous flowers... (Professor Clayton MACKENZIE, Department of English Language & Literature, Hong Kong Baptist University)

From ‘Love’s Labour’s Lost’ to ‘A Thanksgiving’, the double-degree poets recollect the fleeting moments of connexion, and take you on a flight of fancy... (Dr CHOI Tat Heung, Department of Education Studies, Hong Kong Baptist University)



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LEE Sui Man Eva

Electronic edition of ‘Connexion’

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Pocket edition of ‘Connexion: A Poetic Ensemble’

By Dr CHOI Tat Heung