

AYANE KAWATA

*from* Castles in the Air – a dream journal

Translated from the Japanese by Sawako Nakayasu

*These poems are taken from the book, Time of Sky and Castles in the Air (Litmus Press, 2010), by Ayane Kawata and translated by Sawako Nakayasu.*

## Horse

For some reason I acquire a horse, but I don't know how to harness it. A rope around its neck would probably be painful. I try to remember how I had seen a horse bridled, but I don't quite know how to make it bite. I wonder if it will eat grass when it gets hungry. Or if it will be okay if I tie it under a tree and it rains and gets wet. I can't find a stable anywhere. Then the horse disappears and becomes my younger sister. She lies down upon the bare night grass and tries to sleep. I think she'd get cold like that, but she rolls around as if to say, "I'm fine."

## Grown thin

I go to visit Y in what is perhaps her study or dressing room, where the walls are plastered over with pictures, and letters with drawings, and there are little doll-like things hanging. It is like the room of a young girl. Y has grown thin and is bald, and the adolescent Y is seated sideways in front of the mirror stand with eyes vacantly open. Her legs are all bone. There is a bandage on her bared bottom as well as bruises. It's a painful sight. Y does not at all notice my presence nearby as she sits in a daze surrounded by windowless walls. Coming to understand that this may be the end of our relationship, I look at the pictures on the wall and read some of the letters.

## Overpass at night

I arrive alone at the station in the middle of the night. The platform is elevated, and I go down the stairs of the overpass, but it is so dangerous I need to hold the handrails on both sides. For the time being I let the things in my hand fall down to the ground. When I make my way to the bottom, with both hands on the handrails, my young mother is waiting for me in the darkness below, wearing a shawl. "Where are your things?" she asks slightly reproachfully. When I tell her, "I dropped them from up above," she regretfully says, "Oh." "Look, it's no problem," I say casually as I quickly retrieve from the dark ground all the things I had dropped from above, picking up my short pencils, notebook, paperback, and empty lunchbox. "This is enough." I think that it is a well-organized pile of belongings, if I do say so myself.

## Falling apart

Repeatedly, something falls apart. I simply have the actual feeling that I accept that “this is how things fall apart,” but there is nothing I can see. Its concrete texture has flowed past and disappeared.

## Ability to take action

A man places his hand on my tense, frozen back and inspects it, concluding, “On a scale of large, medium and small, your ability to take action is small.”

## Travel scene

I go on a trip, and take in the sight of a deceased person's bedding being slid piece by piece down the corridor of a tall tree and shoved down below, which leaves a lingering resonance in my ears. Later, there is nowhere for me to spend the night.

## Two pieces of cloth

“Knead and mix them together,” I am instructed—so I try to do so, but when I take a closer look they are two thin pieces of cloth and it is very difficult to get them to mix together.