

A Short Stay at Nanjing Pukou Train Station

Xianghe Fan

The grit has been lying there for almost half a
century,
with the sun burning it to white, it cools down
at the summer night.
Right now, the color is still green.
A lot of things are green: the train, the roof of
the little house,
the grass growing beside the rail, the halo from
my glasses.
The heat has killed all the scents left by spring.
Everything is burning, the dried-up dirt,
the brightened ceiling lamp on which I see dust.
Water is nowhere to be seen, except the sweat
sticking to my hair.
Summer in Nanjing is always hot, hot and
bright.

A shadow on the concrete floor of the platform

is the shadow of the platform itself. Standing
there,
I hear something that is to be waited.
I hear something that is not here at the moment,
but will soon
run into my sight, the train that doesn't rumble,
the station that doesn't flourish, will soon
drive me out of the empty place.

The guard never sleeps in the day,
no matter how stuffy it is, the deserted thing
that is under his guard, never thinks of talking.
I begged him to let me in.
“Alright, but don't stay long.”

I'm not staying long, I'm also not leaving, and
the place is dead, but the death has not come.
Tourists will keep visiting here, they might take
the risk
of jumping off the platform, but never will they
scream.
Nothing's coming to crash them down without
notice.
There will never be, in their concept, a gunshot,
a nuclear bomb, a fascist,

or an anti-fascist. Sometime, they might have to
make some complaints:

the humans are persecuting the orangutans,
the city is now in the danger of aftershocks,
the fountain is not getting alive again.

All of these take them to the end of the station.

The guard will not be told that they are leaving,
they won't just walk out from the front gate.

The summer has been so long, long and hot.

No matter how stuffy it is, the guard never falls
asleep.

In his little room, he's got a fan, a television, a
desk, and a nice wooden chair.