

Huangpu

by gray polish
can't give this city light
a stage like the towers

on the doubled waterfront
demanded by river
sacrifice of tungsten
coal

yellow wood aged

Above the Huangpu River

Some darkness waits for light

as you and I wait
for sunset to touch towers with light

[un]til skyline dresses night
in tungsten neon LCD
& who knows across river

tries out for sublime
Some darkness waits for light
to follow

your steps
and you are made of light
absorbed-- more than I
can-- by your dark skin

Blocks Behind Bund

Court musicians traded wings
 their brilliant silk-faded pinions
 or just lives
for our khaki gray & navy
(they're not uniforms today
 traded their patrons
 some centuries ago
for grubby yi jao & re-creased notes
in hands still smooth

 by calluses to play
not lift grain
must play at our request
and never at some government
 to eat.

Musicmakers on Fuzhou Lu

You see our old hair & think decades
but we've been together for centuries
 blowing these pipes, clashing this red sandalwood
Only in changing lives

we've changed
 brilliant silk wings for your
 uniform navies & khaki-to-grays
 (no more the fashion?
 we'll change again
when dingy yi jao generosity
is enough \ runs out