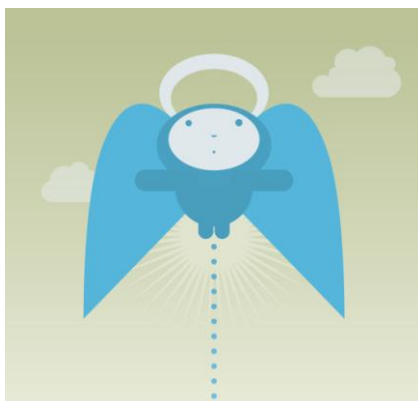


Poems by Bao Dat

THOUGHTS TRAVEL

Bao Dat

Understanding



"You wash the dishes!"
Mom shouted in a sharp voice
"Why should I do that?"
Replied Dad with flaming eyes
Little daughter came to do it.

Thanks



Everyone has a hero
I have mine too

Not a professor who lectures
nor a writer who tells
not a singer who mesmerizes
nor a prophet who claims
not a counselor who advises
nor a saint who leads

A simple lady she is
behind a library counter
who smiles
and suggests
the books I need
just when I need them most

A stepping stone
for the success
of others
without arrogance
without asking
for a favour in return

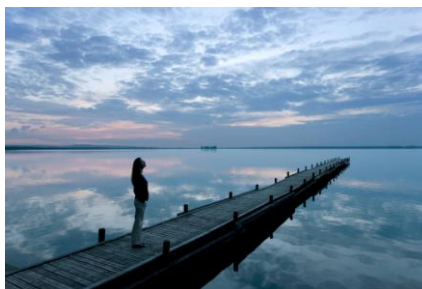
From a girl
to an old lady
She was with me
long before
and long after
my school years

Yesterday I learned
that Mrs Anny
My hero
has passed away
from a heart attack

Leaving me to wonder
If I truly
had thought of her
with the kind of thoughts
I'm displaying here
before her heart rested
and her smile ceased

Leaving me to wonder
How many of us
whom she has assisted
to become profound humans
had been profound enough
to say 'thanks'
with the real intent
of the word.

Dreams



Some people weave dreams
like weaving empty baskets
holding them, waiting

Some people chase dreams
like kids chasing butterflies
watching them leaving

Some people catch dreams
like children catching a bird
to keep it in a cage

Some people turn dreams
into a green bitter gourd
making it their character

Some people grow dreams
like gardeners grow flowers
that won't live for long

Some people fear dreams
as if standing on a cliff
pleading for safety

Some people ride dreams
like a boat rocking through waves
moving night and day

Dreams are a journey
which turn into illusions
when you lose patience!

Talk, travel, hear, touch



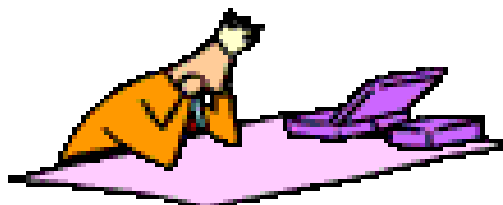
You talk
with your eyes
when words become unnecessary
Eyes are words

You travel
with your mind
when distance
is purely a matter of geography
Minds connect

You hear
with your heart
when silence
becomes the only sound
from someone who helps
expecting nothing in return

You touch
with your kindness
when no one else cares
for the one you do.

Revenge



When you don't
take revenge
on your enemies
You shock them
with your generosity

They may think
you are forgetful
or stupid

But
they also fear
what may be coming
and yet
it
never does come

You put them
on their toes
making them
afraid
of you!

Your hair



I cut your hair
with my delicate fingers
those that play songs
responding to strings
now playing with your hair

Bit by bit they fall
gently, on to me
You kindly wipe them off
with your hands
It was a good feeling
We take care of each other
Isn't life beautiful?

We don't need to ride
through roller coasters
We don't need to jump
on a bungee cord
We don't need to dance
at a disco party

All the excitement
of life
is when I touch your hair
Isn't life beautiful?

Elements of life



Life is
a series
of chemical
reactions

Everything
you learn
changes you
in some way

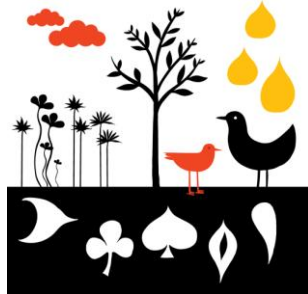
Everyone
you meet
makes you
see yourself
in a different light

Each event
makes you stop
taking things
for granted

Each discovery
keeps you
wondering
there must be still
many other ways

Every new day
A new experiment
is waiting
for you.

There is



There is a rich heart
in every poor child
there is bursting life
in a tiny egg

There is a whole world
in your eyes for me
there can be darkness
in every light bulb
there can be brightness
in a mystery

There are millions of notes
in a musical string
there are big troubles
from a piece of gold

Tools have no impact
until we use them
life has no meaning
until we live it.

Again



I repack
my journey
discarding
hatred
misery
anger
and pain

Organizing
cheers
bliss
cuteness
and love
in my suitcase

The day
I check in
I do it
with a smile
knowing
the stubborn me
would do
my trip
just the same
again

Adventures



A baby child
sitting on top
of a hill
sloping, dusty
in the heat
of Kathmandu sun

All alone
she's sliding
slowly down
her tiny fingers
holding
to the sand
in a loose grip

Relaxed, carefree
in a dangerous situation
down there
at the bottom
is traffic, moving

This would freak out
parents in my city
the community would scream
and call the police

Is it true
that if
you're children
of poor families
your life costs less
and risks more
and that way
experiences
way more?

Global effect



Sanskrit chanting
on Spanish guitar
from a Chinese
CD sound track

Tibetan script
in a Nepalese temple
well observed
by a Myanmar lady
who is chatting
with a British man
in an Indian dress

all bringing
a sense
of inter-culturalness
to a local destination
on which I look
with admiration!

Learning



We're outsiders
of this culture
that we visit

Admiring temples
with closed doors
we're happy
taking photos

Smiling with locals
without speaking
a word
of their language

Staring at the poor
without helping
watching events
without taking part

Judging the world
from inside us
interacting with
personal resources
making do
with mere speculations

Only one day to realize:
life is overwhelming
we are limited
to bridge this gap
we learn

What's wrong with me?



I'm a man
always waiting
to be happy
in a nostalgic way

When I travel
I miss my home
then when at home
I miss travel

I was yesterday
in Kathmandu
not exploring the city
but making plans
for Pokara

I found myself
in Pokara
not enjoying the site
but asking questions
about Kathmandu

Back home, tomorrow
I shall not rest
but will spend time
getting excited
about photos
of places I've been

I'm someone
with a past
and a future
and not much
in the middle

What is left



When I chat with you
I write better
as my thoughts
are sparked off by you

When I'm writing
I talk better
as those words
I share with you

Conversations
are lubrication
the ink that flows
along the pen
of inspiration

The content
of our chat
I hardly remember
but the issue
of interest
I managed
to capture!

The layers of things

Bao Dat & Dzeelfa Zainal



There are layers
in things we find

Onions have skin
fragrance and spice
Houses have bricks
pillars and tiles
The field has soil
water and rice

The land has trees
mountains and light
Humans have feelings
culture and fashion
Voices have got tone
rhythm and intonation

That way we interact
with those voices
peeling off each track
making choices

The more layers
we can detect
with understanding
the more we'd reflect
on our thinking
so as to change it
from what's conventional
to a state of being
multi-dimensional!

Invisibility



People walk past
without noticing
that I'm here
being a shadow
faint like a mist
with a small ego
I hardly exist

I am forgotten
day by day
I am invisible
all the way

What have I done wrong?
That I do not know
Has this happened long?
I can tell you so

I hang about
in the same building
with everyone
breathing the same air
taking the same space
drinking the same water
recognizing the same faces

And yet
nobody stops
to greet me
or receive me
with a smile
or treat me
with a handshake

I am forgotten
day by day
I am invisible
all the way

I overhear conversations
on finance and worry
triumph and defeat
promotion and envy
rivalry and despair
revenge and pleasure
gossip and affairs
all of which I'm not part of

Quietly
I move
along corridors
from room to room
when talk turns into silence
day turns into night
pressure turns into leisure
crowds turn into emptiness

Patiently
I empty ashtrays
wipe off dust
tidy up desks
mop up floors
sponge down windows
turn off lights
and lock doors

My day stretches its length
and shrinks its pleasure
but I mustn't be bothered
sweating, drained, even frail
I rest my tools
inside their quiet room
before shutting its retiring door
one which humbly says
'janitor'

Love



There's love from the wind
There's love above the sky
There's love around your hair
There's love on my mind
There's love everywhere
By the tree, in the music
When you say 'Don't love me'
My heart does the opposite



Poem & illustrations by Bao Dat

Surprise



Surprise is feeling shocked and then happy
Surprise is a cook book without a recipe
Surprise is when we argued and you wanted to die
Just when I opened the door and apologized

Love is a broken car



Love is a game
hurting you inside
love is a flame
burning down your life

Love comes and stays
to make you feel silly
when it goes away
your heart is messy

Love may be pretty
looking from afar
but can be nasty
like a broken car

My boss



My boss is like strawberry
sometimes sweet
sometimes sour
quite unpredictable
but full of power

My job



My job tastes like a strange fish
delicious but dangerous
pushing me around in constant travel
dragging me down like other people

My friend doesn't talk



Always tired
Always quiet
That's my friend Jiamin

Hurriedly in the morning
Jiamin leaves home
his hair is uncombed

He comes back
to sneak out after dinner
not a word to his mother

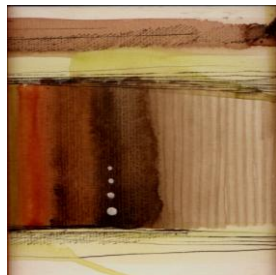
Glued to the bright running screen
are his wide opened eyes
dark room of computer games
is where he lives his life

Night after night
with energy running dry
Jiamin tiptoes into bed
No time to feed his pet

When mother is up
Jiamin is at school
after a short night's rest
sleeping at his own desk

Now you know why
My friend doesn't talk
Always tired
Always quiet

THOUGHTS TRAVEL



Thoughts travel
from the thinking of my brain
to the feeling of my heart
to be enriched
and slide down to my hand
to swim through the ink of my pen
before jumping out
into the playground of my paper

Thoughts travel
in a blue envelope
from the postman of my hometown
to the friend of my childhood

Thoughts travel
from the words in my letter
to the eyes of my reader
to touch her heart and warm her mind

Today thoughts travel
back to me in her reply
telling me that my thought
has brought her a blissful smile



Poem & illustration by Bao Dat

When words are free



A good journey brings inspiration
and lets reality touch imagination
as my eyes stretch across the sky
a horizon of words read between the lines

No writing desire needs to be sought
no effort's required to bring out thoughts
words are streaming out like shower in spring
free from my mind like an alphabet with wings

Words start moving to form connections
the brighter ones express affection
the weaker bits become confused
they drop and drip and are abused

Images fight their way to bring contrast
though some of them become harassed
what seemed at first a powerful forum
became at last a broken poem!

Sep 2005
Fuzhou China

Yong Quan Temple



I often spend another day
whingeing about wrong things
I often need somebody
to blame for my sufferings

But what's happening today?
Something is letting me go
As I make my way
to the Yong Quan Temple

The Buddhist chanting
has cleaned my mind
pure and soothing
like rain from the sky

I smile with the world
It smiles back like a mirror
I'll draw you in words
and write you in pictures

'Here one forgets to go home'
says the inscription in stone
For a moment time has stopped
and let me write, alone.

Bao Dat

Written on Gushan Mountain, Fuzhou China