

Concrete

By Samantha Lê

This morning, through the moon roof of my car, the sky hung heavy, mirroring the grayness of the concrete freeways. Caught in the middle world where gods won't tread, flattened between dense, gray fog from above and hard, gray roads below; I looked for the first time at the landscape of my world. It is one made up of man's gray ambition. Hard edges. Right angles. Concrete structures and walls stood silent; cities and roadways stretched farther east than my eyes could see.

Driving through the city, I was struck by the impermanent nature of this fabricated world constructed from concrete and held together by re-bar. Buildings that cannot be moved suddenly sprouted limbs before my eyes. From the malleable dirt, structures rose and fell, rebuilding themselves from the carcass of what came before, always with indifference toward the past. Freeways grew longer and wider while I slept. Concrete dried and hardened inside my chest.

Before skyscrapers, the clouds floated closer to our heads. Before freeways, we were embraced in the arms of mountains and nurtured by the tongues of rivers. But with concrete, we have created monsters whose tentacles pierce the sky and dig through the earth. They reach into the very soul of who we are. These are monsters we can no longer control. And one gray day, much like today, when we find ourselves pressed tightly between the dense gray sky and the impenetrable gray concrete, when we are surrendering our souls at the feet of these monsters, the roads, buildings, freeways and monuments will remain indifferent to our self-inflicted demise. Concrete knows that it will endure long after we decay.

Copyrighted by Samantha Lê
February 2009