

Banquet Speech

Tim Lilburn

Thank you Zhao Si for your kind words. Please communicate my thanks to the board of The European Medal for extending this award to me.

It is an honour for me to be invited to join a group of medal laureates that includes Tomas Venclova and Ataul Behramoglu.

It is possible, even at the best of times, for poets, some poets, to be a little embarrassed by their vocation. It can seem an anachronism or affectation, being a poet. We are in a historical moment when poets can be especially conflicted about what they do – poetry can seem so ineffectual before climate change, the rise of fascism and the need to decolonize and work toward reconciliation with First Nations. Some are tempted now to think that they should set poetry aside and turn to activism or that they should make their poetry overtly political and turn it into pages of declaration and denunciation. Beauty seems an avoidance of political responsibility, a kind of elitism, a form of privileged avoidance of involvement and therefore a masking, an abetting, of injustice.

But we should not be so quick to abandon poetry in extreme, even dire, times like these. I like to recall the example of Pablo Neruda, in particular what he attempted to do his great book *Canto Generale* and certain long poems in it like “Let the Woodcutter Awaken” and “The Heights of Machu Picchu.” Neruda wrote much of this book while he was in exile in Mexico, fleeing the Chilean dictatorship of that time. He saw these poems, especially the first one, as important means of stopping the appearance of European totalitarianism in the Western Hemisphere in the 1940s. Neruda learned much from the great Mexican muralists like Diego Rivera while living in Mexico in the 1940s and these poems grew out of that experience. He learned from Rivera that if you present large sweeping depictions of society and history, you will free people, give them a sense of power. They see it all laid out before them, previously fragmented political and economic forces, set into pattern, and they are less cowed, confused and ideologically charmed. He also learned from the Mexican muralists to love the small and the particular. Describe in detail distinct lives, within the sweeping view, and you create love and empathy in your readers and help establish a commonwealth of respect and civility. These are some of the things Neruda learned and he tried to practice them in his poems.

I believe the act of poetry making itself is a contemplative engine and, as such, it can have deep social effect. Attention breeds courtesy, an openness to the new and unlike. So poetry does not dwell at the social margins; it is not an adjunct to life and politics. It stands at the center of both; in its empathy, imagination, narrative range, its commitment to the striking of beautiful, arresting patterns, it creates the political center.

So I tell a room of poets – keep gathering your fragments, hatching startling metaphors and working the dynamism that results in the penetrating seeing lyric poetry, all poetry, demands, in which both objects and their beholders are liberated.

答谢词

蒂姆·利尔本 赵 四 译

感谢赵四授奖词中所言。也请转致我对奖章评委会授奖予我的谢意。

列身奖章得主行列是我的荣幸，这一行列中既已有托马斯·温茨洛瓦和阿涛·贝赫拉姆格鲁这样的诗人。

对诗人来说，即便在最好的时代，某些诗人也可能会对他们的工作感到有点尴尬。做个诗人看上去像犯了时代错误或在装模作样。我们身处一个诗人们对其所为尤有内心冲突的历史时刻——在气候变迁、法西斯主义崛起、必须祛殖民化、与原住民和解等问题面前，诗歌看似如此地无能为力。现在有些诗人不禁认为应当把诗搁到一边，求助于行动主义，或者应当让他们的诗公然地政治化，变为一页页的公告和声讨檄文。美看似在回避政治责任，是种精英主义，是种回避介入的特权形式，因而是对非正义的掩饰和唆使。

但是我们不该这么快地走极端抛弃诗歌，即便糟糕的是，时代喜欢这样。我总爱回顾巴勃罗·聂鲁达的例子，尤其是他在其伟大作品《漫歌集》和其中一些长诗《伐木者醒来吧》《马丘比丘之巅》中所欲为之事。聂鲁达是在逃离他的时代之智利独裁统治、流亡墨西哥期间写下的绝大部分该书。他视这些诗作，尤其是《伐木者醒来吧》为在 1940 年代的西半球阻止出现欧洲极权主义的重要方法。那时住在墨西哥的聂鲁达从伟大的壁画家迭戈·里维拉处学到了许多东西。他学自后者：如果你给出巨大的社会、历史全景式描绘，你将会解放人民，赋予他们力量感。他们看着先前四分五裂的政治、经济图景在眼前全面铺开，被置入形式中，他们便会相对不再胆怯，较少迷惑和被意识形态施以魔咒。他也从墨西哥壁画家们那里学到热爱微小和独异。在全景视野里、于细节中描绘独特生命，你便能在你的读者中创造出爱与同情，帮助建起尊重与文明的联邦。这便是聂鲁达所习得并尝试在其诗歌中所实践的一些东西。

我相信诗歌创制自己的行动是一台冥想的发动机，因此它能够有深刻的社会影响。关注长育出谦恭、对新与异之事物的开放接受。因此诗歌并不居留于社会的边缘；它并不是生活和政治的一个附加物。它居于两者各自的中心；以其同情、想象力、叙述范围，以它对美丽、捕获人心之模式的惊异效果的承诺，它创造出政治的中心。

因而我奉告一室诗人：不懈集结你的片断，孵化惊人隐喻，运作起动力机制，直到那穿透力见证物与其观看者双双被解放的抒情诗歌、一切诗歌的产出。