

Closely related to this fascination with maps is a parallel obsession with the figure of the traveler or explorer. The collection's final poem, "Anders Sparrman – Circumnavigator, Stranded," is written in the voice of an 18th century Swedish naturalist who sailed with Captain Cook. (Wästberg also recently released a historical novel based on Sparrman's life.) In the poem's imagined monologue, Sparrman recounts the things he's seen on his travels—the orangutan, the lion, the Antarctic icebergs, the death of his fellow travelers—and claims they have turned him into "a semaphore telegraph at humanity's fringes." Sparrman's travels lead to questions about reality itself: "I stumbled over the boundary / to myself and found myself on a village street in the universe."

The figure of Sparrman is interesting as a stand-in for Wästberg himself. Both are men who have travelled widely and brought news home to Sweden (as Wästberg writes of his native country "...A captain's cabin. The storerooms still large. / We rock in the swells from a delayed future..."), and both fought passionately for the international civil rights causes of their day (Sparrman was an early abolitionist, and Wästberg is the founder of Swedish Amnesty and tireless anti-apartheid activist). And as Wästberg considers the end of Sparrman's travels, it's clear that he is foreseeing his own as well. If the mind at work here ever finds a place to rest before the ultimate end of its journey, it is in the tender long poem "On Love," a meditation on a successful love affair late in life. In it Wästberg writes, "Our hands move toward each other / assured of rest. / Nothing to write about. / Much to live in."

Water the Moon

By Fiona Sze-Lorrain. Grosse Pointe Farms, MI: Marick Press, 2009.

Reviewed by William La Ganza

The cover photograph of Fiona Sze-Lorrain's *Water the Moon* is of a large and dusty old clock on a public building. Its hands, extending beyond the centre, form a cross, recalling the four Chinese constellations corresponding to the points of the compass. The author has left Asia for Europe, breaking from family and tradition to start a new life in Paris. The collection is in three parts: 1. "Biography of Hunger" is about a step toward the unknown, a longing for familiar tastes left behind and a struggle with ambivalence about the past; 2. "Dear Paris" explores the vicissitudes of her life in Paris and being with her husband, much older than she; 3. "The Key Always Opens" explores the existential challenge of disorientation.

The erotic opening lines of "Biography of Hunger," "At the tip of every tongue, / the wind, a chasm - / desire enters the forest. . .," are juxtaposed on

the next page with the image of her grandmother in the kitchen. Her cooking is highly appealing to the senses, with "every seed warm to her touch," "crimson bean paste" that "foams." The food seems alive: "Grains of red beans churn in her palm," "Jump, of course they jump!" The moons she is making with "white dough" are "pert," each like a "chalked face" that she "water[s]" with "green tea." This fertile image of Chinese culture in the East is mitigated by disillusionment at the hypocrisy of Mao, who embraced books even as he "poison[ed]" the "spirits and minds" of the people. Survivors of Tibet carried the dead inside them: "Those who perished / before arriving / built their tombs in those / who escaped." The author feels that she and her father are "two cultures apart," he being "afraid to write feelings," she a "palpitating heart" longing for "more / than a paper response." Ancestral links seem tenuous: holding a map from her grandfather, she realizes that she can "no longer / remember" him—"I am merely a tourist."

At the beginning of "Dear Paris," the author, "barely twenty-one / ... starving and shoeless" is in a new city beneath a column topped with a statue of the flying Spirit of Freedom: "Wings of fear and anxiety capture / my feet when they reach la Bastille." She is on the cusp of a new direction in her life, with new possibilities. On her palm is written the address of a man who has been "waiting / five years": five years that "can free me from the past." The moon is often present; it is also frightening: it "symbolizes fear in my culture / a dark force that hunts / until you cower." On this first night, the moon "was nowhere."

Even as the frequent references to the moon suggest a self-conscious chronology, the author "disregarded age / as a formula for life" when she married a man "[t]hirty-one winters" older than she, his "skin ravaged, wrinkles / resembling silvery gills." Seemingly blessed by the moon, and the harmony of their union, recalled by the repeated "o" sounds in the lines, she is there with him "where windows open wide to the river, / silk curtains in an abating wind, / reach out to their nakedness, / Two bodies curled in a roomful of moonlight, / lying perpendicular / to each other, a destiny parallel."

"The Key Always Opens" touches the subject of crying and what it might mean, or conceal. "Think twice about sadness. / Her eyes tell a story / different from their tears," the author warns. Elsewhere, "Tears / dismantle sleep and fall as autumn leaves." In the poem "A Lot had Happened: A Five Act Play," the author explores a series of human moments and the agony of ambiguity integral to the symbolizing of thought through language. "That is a cry that cries and cries a cry. / ... A tear in a cry and a cry in a tear. A tear with a cry and a cry with / a tear. / A cry tears. It is tearing." A tear can blur sight; emotions can make moonlight seem "austere." This seems to be the key: the wonder we feel before the moon is not engendered by its luminosity, but by our perception of

it: "Yet the light is no mystery – the mystery / is how something moves to filter light through." Both geographical and psychological movement are necessary to having a hand in one's destiny, to existential well-being and enlightenment: "Open your eyes. Feel the earth? / Leave your roots. Leave your ancestors. / ... with a bleeding heart, you flee / all your life along a shadowed curve."