

YAU CHING

Notestone

—Translated from the Cantonese
by Chenxin Jiang

A lake doesn't suffer
the pain of reflecting trees and clouds
a lake only suffers
the pain of reflecting
because she reflects only
herself

Years and years later
I meet you again in a dream
the people in this little village
seem to all be waiting for my arrival
you're on a balcony playing a nameless instrument
is it a guqin? the strings ring out sudden highs and lows like a sanxuan
I pretend not to know you
or the notes you're playing

I walk away but can't let it go
and force myself to find my way back
the place I knew well
has become a pile of rubble
an empty pagoda
crumbling rattlings
are they waiting for me to recognize them
before collapsing

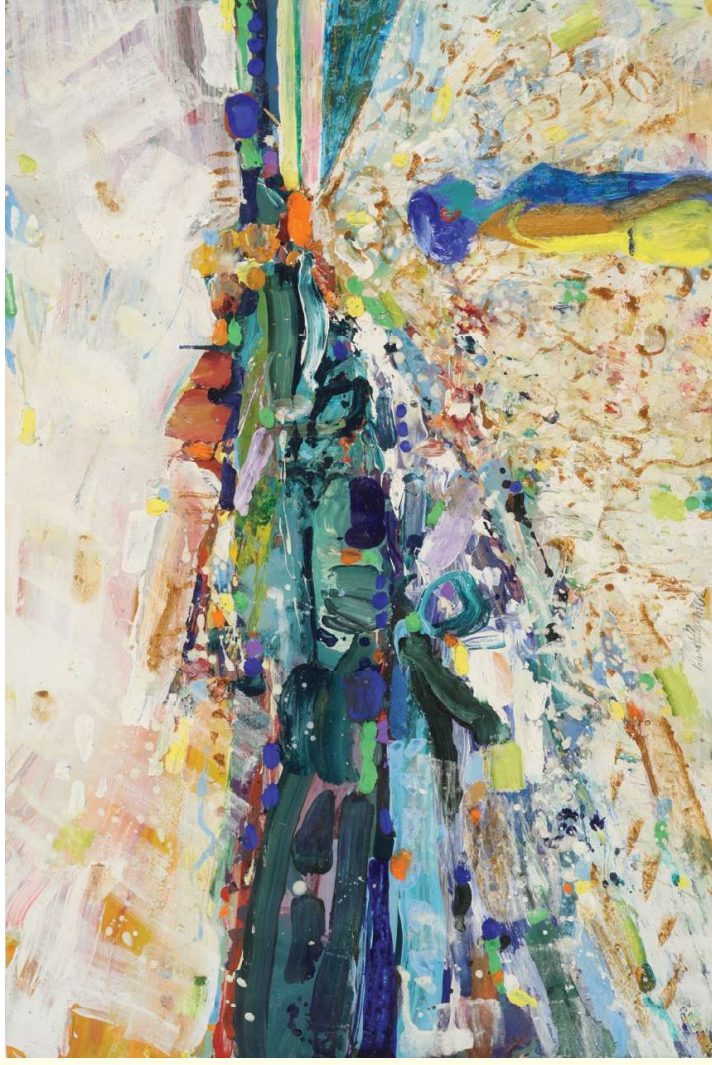
Years and years later
it's hard to get rid of
this part of myself I used to hate
it's already become a pile of rubble
still rising and falling
each lingering note
sinks into the lake like a stone

Born in Hong Kong, **Yau Ching** is a writer, filmmaker, and video artist. She is the author of several collections of poetry, including *The Impossible Home* (Youth Literary Press, 2000; reprint (dirty press, 2017); and *Big Hair, Egg* (Kubrick, 2011). She has also been active in community organizing and public education. Since 2017, she has been an honorary professor at the University of Hong Kong and a visiting professor in Liberal Arts at Shantou University, China.

Chenxin Jiang translates from Italian, German, and Cantonese. Recent translations include *Years of Salt: A Doctor's Story* by Pietro Barotolo and *Lidia Tilotta* (W. W. Norton, 2019) and *The Cowshed: Memories of the Chinese Cultural Revolution* by Ji Xianlin (New York Review Books, 2016), winner of a PEN/Helm Translation Fund Grant.

ROLAND PETERSEN

Figure in a Hilly Landscape, 1962
Painting on paper, 23 x 25 in



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