

Elegy to the Motherland

On July 1, 2021, the Chinese Communist Party, the sole governing party of the People's Republic of China, celebrated its 100th anniversary.

Mythological opening: man in black. Children in white.
Red chairs, red flag, red ground, red past.
There he is again: the martyr, the savior, the god.

Five-star red flags are fluttering in the wind...

Fifteen fighter jets gild the sky with exit wounds. The sky: a mother. This country: an orphan.

When it was easier and wai gong bought a slab of pork on a good day,
I would have expected to grow up sequentially. Instead I interweave two histories
masquerading as the truth.

How clear and bright...

Tiananmen Square still tastes like the ghosts of 32 years ago
when a man faced a line of tanks after shopping;
Nai nai's apartment, its walls blemished with my crayoned handprints, still sings
the aftermath of Red Guard wreckage.

Over the turbulent Yellow and Yangtze rivers...

So many good girls share my last name. Their teal skirts smile
in the wind, their mouths an oblivious orange. I want to believe that in
pandemonium, my mother could recognize me as her daughter. That she would not tap
the shoulder of a black-haired seed and let it sprout into my shadow.

The heroic people have stood up...

A strong heart is innocent but an idle body is not.

What do red and red make? Color in a meaningless sky? Sun vanished, I pivot
to the man who claims to take its place.
I put the hammer on trial. Anyone could be a hero if they say they are enough times.
The stench of history is too rotten to varnish. I know there are more to be counted.

Singing for our beloved....

I crack my head and spill blood on the Great Wall of steel.
Our beloved motherland...

I write a paean for the unremembered.

Beloved motherland.

O martyr, O savior, O god: teach me how to distill tragedy.

