**The Poetic Vision of Kim Kwang-kyu**

**Br. Anthony Teague**

The poems to be introduced here were written between 1975 and 1986; Kim Kwang-kyu has published more works since then, but these are the poems which first made his reputation in Korea, and which I have recently published in English translation. Professor Kim was born in Seoul in 1941, and he is at present a professor in the German department of Hanyang University, having studied German language and literature at Seoul National University and Munich. He published his first volume of poems in the same year, 1975, as he published translations into Korean of poems by Heinrich Heine and Gunter Eich; any one interested in possible Western influences in Professor Kim’s work would also have to know that he has translated poems by Bertold Brecht.

As we begin to read Professor Kim’s work, a useful term for what he is doing may be found in the word an ‘anatomy’. The 17th Century English poet John Donne used this word as an image for a close scrutiny, corresponding to what people today often rather dauntingly call an ‘analysis.’Both these terms are images borrowed from the physical sciences; when chemists analyse, they break down a substance into its component elements in order to be able to describe in detail what it is made of. Donne’s word ‘anatomize’ was borrowed from medical science and is potentially gruesome, suggesting as it does people watching the systematic dissection of a dead body (Donne’s step-father was a doctor). The work of the anatomist, though, is not limited to the discovery of causes of death. Through autopsies, doctors discover the physical mechanics of our being, and this in turn enables others to find ways of restoring similarly diseased bodies to health.

Kim Kwang-kyu has dissected his way through much diseaseu tissue. His study is the sick body of modern society, and his poems are suggestive of [page 24]

diagnoses that are also valid far beyond the confines of this Peninsula; in many poems we have a survey of the main symptoms, in some we glimpse prescriptions, perspectives of healing, but after reading others we wonder if there can be any cure! For the disease dissected and depicted with such subtle wit in Professor Kim’s poems will need more than aspirins to make it better. At the same time, it is not possible to respond to this poetry from the sidelines; it only really works when we recognize ourselves in it!

I want to begin with one of his earliest poems, a prose poem that seems to need no initial explanation:

**SPIRIT MOUNTAIN**

In my childhood village home there was a mysterious mountain 一 Spirit Mountain, it was called—and no one had ever climbed it.

Spirit Mountain could not be seen in daytime.

With thick mist shrouding its lower half and clouds that covered what rose above we could only guess dimly where it lay.

By night too Spirit Mountain could not be seen clearly.

In the moonlight and starlight of bright cloudless nights its dark form might be glimpsed but yet it was impossible to tell its shape or its height.

One day seized with a sudden longing to see Spirit Mountain—it had never left my heart—I took an express bus back to my home village, but strange to say Spirit Mountain had utterly vanished and the now unfamiliar village folk I questioned swore there was no such mountain in those parts.

This poem is not, I think, mainly about a person’s disappointment on returning to childhood haunts. The mountain of the poem was no private dream; in childhood it was a vision shared by all in the village, transcending the ordinary but at the same time transforming the ordinary by its presence. The loss is not individual, but collective, and it has been brought about by all the violent changes that Korea has been subjected to. The speaker has long been away, living in the city, but even in the village there has been a break in continuity, a destruction of tradition, so that the strangers now living there have lost sight of anything transcending their ordinary material existence, and have no memories of anything else ever having existed.

Urbanization has robbed Korea of so much humanity, and many of Kim Kwang-kyu’s poems are city-poems:

[page 25]

**Going Home in the Evening**

We gave up any thought of flying long ago

These days we don’t even try to run

we dislike walking so we try to ride

(We mostly travel about by bus or subway)

Once on board we all try to get a seat

Once seated we lean back snoozing

Not that we are tired

but every time money-making is over

our heads become atrophied

scales sprout all over our bodies

Our blood has grown cold

But still with half-open eyes

our practised feet take us home

We return every evening to our homes like reptiles returning to their swamp

Professor Kim invites us to recognize the sub-human sides of modern life; the person speaking in his poems does not moralize from outside or above, but offers a little vignette of an only too familiar experience. I suppose that for many today, the private car has replaced the bus and subway, but perhaps the reptile is only more numbly headed for the swamp, sitting in the middle of a traffic jam.

Professor Kim’s poems are in the tradition of social satire, and in that tradition the portrayal by negative examples often goes hand-in-hand with positive visions drawn from an elsewhere closer to Nature, as in this poem:

**Ducks**

Holy bird!

Never ever perching

in branches of trees of comfort

those trees that grow straightest

if not completely vertical

that generate no electricity

A duck is not one for lying down or getting up

Quietly wandering over winter river water

it merely repeats simple gestures

It has not picked up any complicated habits [page 26]

Sometimes it leaves water prints

in the snow-covered ice

and if an earthquake comes

riding the whirlwind it flies up

up into the sky

casting a final shadow

destined to become a fossil

on the land of death

Most perfect bird!

The place from which the duck comes flying

and to which it returns

is a place I have come too far from

Borne on trains traversing continents

crossing oceans by aeroplane

I have travelled so far in any case

that now it is impossible for me

to cross that far horizon and return

How happy is the duck returning

with unthinking wing-beats

whenever the seasons change

If I am ever to return to that place

I must first forget with groans of pain

all the language I have so arduously learned

With far greater difficulty than in the gaining

I must lose one by one all the things I know

Useless the pitiful body’s writhing

as it tries to get up and get up again

then lie down and lie down again

At last I shall have to set out alone

How envious then is the life of the duck

that flies and flies then drops plop dead

Blessed bird

serenely frequenting that far-off place

I can never return to so long as I live

There are times when I long to be a duck

Such poems do not seem to require much commentary, but the reader should notice the very strong lyric element in that last poem. The ‘poetic’is a very difficult word to define, but in the Korean literary context it is important [page 27] to stress that in these poems the poetic and the social are reconciled. In the past, and even today, they are too often considered to be irreconcilable. Next, the poem which gives its title to the whole collection:

**Faint Shadows of Love**

At the end of the year of the April Uprising

we met at five in the afternoon

happily clasped hands in greeting

then sitting in a chill fireless room

our breaths condensing white

we engaged in heated discussions

Foolishly enough we believed

we were living for the sake of something

for something that had nothing to do with politics

The meeting ended inconclusively and that evening

drinking grog at Hyehwadong Rotary

we worried in a pure-minded way

about problems of love and spare-time jobs

and military service

and each of us sang as loud as he could

songs no one listened to

songs no one could imitate

Those songs we sang for no reward

rose up into the winter sky

and fell as shooting stars

Eighteen years later at last we met again

all wearing neckties

each of us had become something

We had become the older generation

living in dread of revolution

We chipped in to cover the cost of the party

exchanged news of our families

and asked the others how much they were earning

Anxious about the soaring cost of living

happily deploring the state of the world

expertly lowering our voices

as we discussed rumours

We were all of us living for the sake of living[page 28]

this time no one sang

Leaving abundant drink and side-dishes behind us

noting one another’s new phone numbers we parted

A few went off to play poker

A few went off to dance

A few of us walked sadly

along the university street we used to frequent

Clutching rolled-up calendars under our arms

in a place returned to after long wanderings

in that place where our love gone by had bled

unfamiliar buildings had appeared suspiciously

the roadside plane trees stood in their old places

and a few remaining dry leaves trembled

sending shudders up our spines

Aren’t you ashamed?

Aren’t you ashamed?

As the wind’s whisper flowed about our ears

we deliberately made middle-aged talk about our health

and took one step deeper into the swamp

One of the experiences reflected in these words is that of finding oneself middle-aged with youth lying back there, lost in the past. For the Korean intellectual of Professor Kim’s generation, though, this implies a shared social experience. The memory of having been a student in April 1960, as he was, means that the loss of youth is paralleled by the loss within Korean society of that vision which drove the students down the streets in April of that year with a burning hope: a hope that guns extinguished in some, time and repression in the rest.

Dictatorship ensued, and there was the challenge of learning to survive as a human being within the silence, the supression of truth and of divergent opinion which it demanded:

**The Land of Mists**

In the land of mists

always shrouded in mist

nothing ever happens

And if something happens

nothing can be seen

because of the mist [page 29]

for if you live in mist

you get accustomed to mist

so you do not try to see

Therefore in the land of mists

you should not try to see

you have to hear things

for if you do not hear you cannot live

so ears keep growing bigger

People like rabbits

with ears of white mist

live in the land of mists

Non-Koreans who were not here in the late ‘70s and early ‘80s may not see at once why long ears were necessary; but even today, when there is much more liberty of expression, the art of getting to the truth of things is scarcely easier. The military ‘put its foot down’ in 1961, as we would say in rather too humorous English, and in the little poem that follows, you should recall the expression:

**Death of a Baby Crab**

One baby crab

caught together with its mother

tumbles out of the hawker’s basket

while the big crabs fixed in a straw rope

foam and wave aimless legs

It crawls ofi sideways sideways over the roadway

in quest of past days of hide-and-seeK in the mud

and the freedom of the sea

It pricks up its eyes and gazes all around

then dies squashed across the roadway

run over by a speeding army truck

Where the baby crab’s remains rot in the dust

no one sees how the light of glory shines

In the deathly silence that the Korean dictators demanded, it took courage to speak, and wit to outwit the censors. By his poems which we might call ‘beast fables, ‘ Professor Kim joins hands with Aesop and La Fontaine, or perhaps rather with Swift. These are allegories, designed for [page 30] readers who have grown the long ears which are not unrelated to those Jesus demands: ‘those who have ears to hear, let them hear’. What do you hear, I wonder, in the following poem?

**The Summer There Were No Cicadas**

One cicada was singing in a persimmon tree

then flew off but was abruptly checked in mid-air

Ahah a spider’s web spreading wide！

The spider hiding under the edge of the roof

had the struggling cicada tied up in a flash

no point in mentioning anything like

conscience or ideas

no place for regret or excuses

At the end of seven years’ training

the cicada’s lovely voice

after scarcely seven days

ended up as a spider’s supper

If you’re caught like that you’ve had it

The cicadas stopped singing

and flying

It was a remarkably long hot summer

In these poems, then, there are evocations of the brutal slaughter of the young by the merciless, of the young who have dreams and songs in which Spirit Mountain still rises mysterious above, an image of the ‘freedom of the sea’. It is by now clear, I hope, that we are dealing with something far removed from the ‘protest poem, of strident tone and indignation. The deaths are not the main point, though, tragic and impoverishing though they are. It is more important for the poet and the reader to reflect on what hope is left:

**Roadside Trees in April**

Their tops were cut off long ago

so as not to touch the power lines

This year even their limbs have been lopped

so they cannot sway if a spring breeze blows

and only the trunks remain like torsos

suffocating and grim

When the lilac perfume deepens

memories of another April day return[page 31]

but now every trailing branch has been cut off

so that the street-side weeping willows

lined up in rows

unable even to unfold new leaves

seething with impatience but

unable to utter even a cry

are putting out leaves from their trunks

Once again Nature offers the poet an image of resistance, of survival, of a stubborn refusal by life to be put down by brute force. And since the theme is hope, it is natural that other poems evoke that hope in ever more lyrical images:

**Evening in May**

Borne on the early summer breeze

gloomy news

Emerging from some house or other

clumsy piano sounds

Backhaus is already dead

now Rubinstein is getting old

but regardless of adults’ despair

there are children beginning Bayer I

and because of this hope

that cannot be wrapped up

in newspaper and thrown away

darkness drops shamefaced

down every quiet street

I suppose there ought to be a footnote to remind the unpianoed reader that Bayer I is the classic first manual for the would-be pianist. I dislike footnotes, and believe that the message is clear. Like Shakespeare and Jane Austen, Kim Kwang-kyu has faith in the power of the new generations to redeem the terrible mess caused by the failures of their parents.

**In Those Days**

Was there anyone who didn’t know? What everyone felt [page 32]

What everyone went through

Was there anyone who didn’t know?

In those days

everybody knew

but pretended not to know

What no one could say

what no one could write

was spoken

in our language

written in our alphabet

and communicated

Was there anyone who didn’t know?

Don’t speak too glibly now times have changed

Stop and think

In those days

what did you do?

The question is a sharp one, very awkward indeed for all those who did little to oppose the insult to Korean dignity represented by the Fifth so-called Republic, whose bald-headed leader seems to be evoked in the following:

**Sketch of a Fetish**

He is no common man

definitely not an ordinary man

Far more lenient than a common man

far crueller than an ordinary man

he is not some meek kind of man

who endures hardship patiently

deliberately hiding his tears

He is not a man who gazes at the moon

longing for days gone by

Nimbly seizing the ball

like a goalkeeper before a tense crowd

he is not a man who works all day

and then goes home in the evening

He is not the kind of man who keeps to his lane

for fear of the traffic patrols [page 33]

He is not a man who speaks in words

as he takes over all the best expressions

producing an urn of white silence

He is not someone who gazes

at the endlessly rolling waves

and fathoms the ocean’s waves

and fathoms the ocean’s heart

He is not a man who hastens

onwards at dawn firm in the conviction

that yesterday’s I is alone believable

He is not the kind of man who lowers his head

and silently follows after

Taking up sacred burdens beyond his power

and marching on and on

he is definitely not an ordinary man

not a common man

in short not a man at all

You must not think, though, that our poet is therefore mute before the radical students, although he certainly respects them, as most Koreans have done, until recently at least. For them too he has sharp messages:

**Old Marx**

Look my young friend

That’s not what history is like

it’s not what you think it’s like

it’s not something that unfolds dialectically

and literature too is not like that

it’s not what you think it’s like

it’s not something that changes logically

You are young

it’s ok if you still don’t know

but just suppose that the moment

you finally realize that really

history and literature are not like that

comes when you have already reached the age

where you can no longer change anything

in your life?

Look my young friend[page 34]

Ideology in the head

can never become love in the heart

Even though our opinions may differ

how fortunate it is

that each one of us lives our share

and how unsatisfying

that each one of us lives only once

then is dead and gone

Even though we die and become the past

history remains as the present

and literature honestly records

the complexities of life in days gone by

Look my young friend

Take care

that your heart doesn’t harden

before your body has had time to grow old Take care!

If Kim Kwang-kyu so often evokes the spirit of the young, I think the following poem about April 1960 explains why:

**No! Not So**

All the pain of the leaves

as they burst in anguish

through their hardened shells

and that of the blooming azaleas

had become a furious cry

on that day the earth shook

as he raced ahead of the others

then fell near the Blue House

His satchel still bulging

with lunchbox and dictionary

robbed of his bright smile

and supple movements

he fell to the roadway

never to rise again

So did he die in vain

in the twentieth year of his youth? [page 35]

No

Not at all

Since the day he cried Drive them out

he has become a lion eternally young

roaring fiercely

on the central campus lawn

he has become a fountain

soaring skywards

His surviving companions sheepishly

graduated and did their military service

got married and had children so that

before you knew it today they are

middle-aged wage-earners

while he has remained unchanging

a young university student

attending lectures regularly

absorbed in impassioned debates

skillfully pursuing the ball

Look there and see his vital image

unswervingly following truth

in his proud successor

defending the nation with his whole being

our promising son

tending anew the ideals

we had forgotten

So it is

Since the day he fell near the Blue House

endlessly rising again

he races on

ahead of us

The challenges facing Korean society are enormous, and unless this country can find deep reserves of vision and inspiration, it may be overwhelmed by the scale of what is demanded of it. The memory of the past offers a hope that again today the spark of that same self-sacrifice and devotion will prevail.

I want to give you here some poems in which Kim Kwang-kyu suggests a few of the ways in which modern Korea has lost its soul: [page 36]

**Kim With Crutch**

5 basement levels

30 floors above ground

150, 000 square yards of floor space

When they were doing the groundwork

for Seoul Building

Kim did the rough jobs

Up and down the dizzying scaffolding

he carried loads of gravel

he helped with the plastering

he stuck on tiles

he fixed window-frames

Under Seoul Building’s foundation stone

lie some 3 years of Kirn’s hard life

and somewhere up the dizzying emergency stairs

that go snaking heavenwards

is stuck

the left leg Kim lost there

Luckily he was wearing a safety helmet

so he escaped death by a hair

and six months later

when Kim came out of hospital on crutches

Seoul Building towering aloft

had become a well-known feature of the capital

Department stores with every kind of everything

a hotel too luxurious to sleep in

saunas and restaurants and financial company offices

everywhere white-clean men

busily banging away on computers

girls looking like screw-holes

noisily chewing gum

and recalling last night

with time too bought and sold for cash

it was a TV screen come alive

Wanting only to see how that spot

at the entrance to the emergency stairs

on the 13th floor

where he had tripped and gone headlong [page 37]

had been finished off

Kim went hobbling along

to visit his former work-site

Suppose he happened to meet Lee the welder

then they might down a daytime glass

to celebrate

But at the entrance to Seoul Building

a janitor wearing a necktie

stopped him

saying people without work can’t come in here

and at the back door where the garbage goes out

a fearsome guard blocked his path

so Kim turned away

Who knows where he went?

Or there is this very vivid anecdote, by which Kim Kwang-kyu shows his links with the Korean short story form:

**Familiar Shoes**

Today in front of the door of 1301

a pair of shoes are lying

The heels are worn down slantwise

the toes scuffed pale

those old shoes are undoubtedly

the ones he wore

Who knows perhaps when he was young

he slaved in the fields

to bring up his family

After losing his old wife

he was obliged to leave his village

and finally ended up in his son’s home

So he came to live silently

secluded like a criminal in a room

in New Town’s high-rise apartment blocks

His grandchildren said he smelt and disliked him

his daughter-in-law found doing his washing a bind

his son was busy so they never met

Every night he watched the tele through to the end

Each morning going up the nearby hill[page 38]

he would count the notes in his wallet

and examine his Farmers’ Cooperative Savings Book

During the day he would stare down

from the veranda on the 13th floor

like a skinny animal trapped in a cage

If he encountered anyone in the elevator

he would quickly turn his gaze aside

and say nothing

He must have lived here about ten months

and we never once exchanged a greeting

but today his familiar shoes

are lying outside the door of 1301

There is no avoiding the fact that at first glance, contemporary society offers little hope. Once people are inside the ‘system’, they lose sight of Spirit Mountain, and concentrate on staying safe, meekly conforming to society’s demands:

**Tightropes**

There’s no audience and yet

everyone’s carrying a pole

and walking the tightrope up in the air

where so many ropes are crisscrossed

that if there’s no way ahead on one

they jump across to the next

and even when resting keep switching

seats from one to another and back

but if you fall

between the ropes you

vanish

into the unfathomed dark

With so many ropes criss-crossing

it sometimes looks like solid ground

but if you blink one eye and

make a false step

you’ve had it so

trying hard not to fall

controlling their swaying bodies

everyone’s ever so cautiously

toeing the line

[page 39]

At one level, you might want to say that Kim Kwang-kyu is a poet of the absurd, refusing to admit that the absurd, refusing to admit that the occupations with which most of the people around us are so busy have any meaning at all in terms of human existence and human dignity. This kind of position, defying as it does the naive polarities of activist or Marxist creeds, has sometimes exposed him to criticism; satire has always been a risky enterprise, once the audience begins to recognize itself in the portraits！ Do you find yourself in what follows, I wonder? I hope not:

**Small Men**

They are getting smaller

They keep getting smaller

Before they had finished growing

already they had begun to get smaller

Before they first fell in love as they thought about war

they began to get smaller

The older they get the smaller they get

As they break off a yawn they get smaller

As they shudder from terrifying nightmares

they get smaller

Jumping every time someone knocks they get smaller

Hesitating even at a green light they get smaller

As they lament that they do not grow old quickly enough

they get smaller

As they bury their heads in the newspaper

since the world is so calm they get smaller

Standing neatly in line wearing ties they get smaller

As they all think about earning money doing business

they get smaller

As they listen to inaudible orders they get smaller

As they repeat words identical as uniforms they get smaller

As they fight with invisible enemies they get smaller

As they attend multiple meetings and clap they get smaller

As they consume luncheons of power and pick their teeth

they get smaller

As they grow fat and play golf they get smaller

As they go to cocktail parties and drink scotch they get smaller

As they embrace their wives now grown too stout they get smaller They have grown small[page 40]

At last they have grown small

They have grown smaller than the quick-eyed sparrows

that fly up to the eaves from the garden

Now they know how to smoke while wearing a mask

They know how to laugh louder than ever at unfunny moments

They know how to be sincerely sad for long periods

about things that are not sad

They know how to keep happiness hidden deep down

They know how to evaluate correctly each kind of anger

They know how not to say what they really feel

and to cast furious glances at one another

They know how not to think of questions nobody asks

They know how to count their blessings

every time they pass a prison

They know how each to take an umbrella and walk down alley-ways

when it rains

Instead of dancing in the plains

They know how to sing falsetto in bars

When they make love they know how to cut back on uneconomical

wearisome caresses

Truly

they have grown small

They have grown quite small enough

all that is left is their Name Occupation and Age

now they have grown so small they are invisible

so they cannot get any smaller

I have taken you on a wandering journey through Kim Kwang-kyu’s poems, and in conclusion I believe that the word he would set at the end is hope, not despair. There are no easy answers, but there is an almost intuitive trust in the mysterious processes of Nature that underlie our human life:

**An Old Old Question**

Who doesn’t know that?

As time flows on

flowers wither

leaves fall

and one day or other

we too grow old and die like beasts[page 41]

return to the earth

vanish towards the sky

Yet the world unchanging

as we live on keeps prodding us awake

with an old old question

Only look!

Isn’t this new and amazing and lovely?

Every year the deep perfume

of the lilac growing on a rubbish dump

filling the back-streets

An unsightly prickly cactus

dangling from the corner of a broken pot

blooming with one bright flower

after long restless nights

Springing from a pond’s black slime

the bright form of a lotus flower

And surely

a child’s sweet smile

sprung from a dark human womb

makes us still more perplexed?

We oblige our children

to put on shoes for

they might tread barefoot on the ground

and when their hands get muddy

we wipe them off saying that’s dirty

For goodness sake!

Not rooted in the ground

their bodies not smeared with mud

the children’s bursting hearts

their bouncing bodies

as they frolick and grow

all that welling energy

Where does it come from?

Still, the individual is not released from responsibility for and participation in this unholy mess we call the modern world; we are not allowed to opt out or wash our hands. Dictators often claim to have come to purify society, but the problem of pain is a deeper one, demanding also our acceptance of a share of pain: [page 42]

**Wisdom tooth**

It’s a nuisance

it ought to come out

it will just go rotten

and damage the molars

a wisdom tooth should come out

I don’t know why they grow at all

you can’t chew with them

(a doctor’s words are always

medically correct)

But will taking it out

really be the cure?

(Frightened patients

are invariably pig-headed)

I think I will not get rid

of this wretched tooth

though its aching keeps me awake at night

it may be a bothersome wisdom tooth

but who if not I will chew

and be capable of patiently enduring

and treasuring

this part of myself

that gives me my share of pain?

So what, finally, is Kim Kwang-kyu’s solution? There isn’t one. He does not talk about God, usually, since that is not directly part of his own perspective, however much the believer may find intimations of faith all through these poems and their vision of humanity. No, he only invites each one to pick up again and again the burdens of social participation that are part of our deepest identity as human beings. We may not run away into solitude, for even Nature shows us that our place is in the midst of the world:

**Mountain Heart**

Since I cannot be born again

on days when my heart grows grim

I leave my quiet house

and go away to the mountains

If I climb to the top of Kunak Mountain

leaving the world to its own devices [page 43]

only scattered rocks and dense foliage

between the leaves of the dark-hooded oaks

a wild cat slinking past

on a rotting tree stump

a lizard basking in the sun

jealous of all these trees and animals

that have the earth and the sky for their home

living at ease with just their bare bodies

and of those flowers and insects

that die and are reborn year by year

I let loose a heroic 4 Yahoo’

but since there is no Lord of the mountain

all I get back is a wayfaring voice

I may climb the lofty peaks

or go down into the deep ravines

the mountain has no central point

only everywhere the chirping of mountain birds

mingles and flows with the foaming torrents

while the scent of the dark green forest

unfolds and rises cool

Unable to settle gently on a branch

unable to sleep huddled in a rocky crevice

unable to rot away with the dead leaves

leaving behind my heart

that longs to Jive in the mountains

I depart and

on the day I return from Kunak Mountain

now a nameless little hill

in house and village I am reborn

In his poems, Kim Kwang-kyu does not offer us the intimate revelation of private emotions that Romanticism has taught us to expect in poetry, perhaps because he takes poetry more seriously than that. These poems arise from his experience of life as a social being. That is why I have suggested that it is much more helpful to read him in the light of the satirical poetry of Pope or Swift. There we find the same variety of speaking voices, in a similar variety of relationships to the aspects of society to be criticized. The speaker is sometimes wise, sometimes puzzled, sometimes angry, sometimes incarnat- [page 44] ing the folly under attack; but always in satire the poet and the reader are in the end united before the question of their responsibility towards society.

In Kim Kwang-kyu’s poems, we are asked to think more deeply about the failures of the modern world, and our own share of responsibility for those failures, in the hope that, all together, we shall be able to advance towards a more humane future, one in which these poems will perhaps no longer be needed, but until which such poems are absolutely necessary for human survival.

All these poems appear in *Faint Shadows of Love*, poems by Kwang-kyu, Kim translated by Brother Anthony (Forest Books, London) published in 1991.