

Sestina: People's Republic of China, the Foreign
Woman Laments the Revolution's Failure to
Accomodate Love · Marilyn Krysl

You're married. So is everyone else Chinese.
How odd, a billion people done up in couples.
You never see no flirty eyes let fly
a dazzle. A place for every piece (please
excuse my profanity) and every piece in place.
"We cannot have the people going crazy!"

Imagine Mao saying this to Zhou. Crazy
as a loon, I moon, imagining your Chinese
face eyes hands. I live on looks, no place
for assignation. What happens here to couples
is they marry. Until which time (please,
don't touch) they burn. No one gets high, flies

to Jamaica, makes it. No one gets high. They fly
to Canton, work at the Trade Fair. *Work*. Crazyness
is a luxury only capitalists can afford. Please
remember Mrs. Marcos' three hundred suitcases! The Chinese
have more sense and fewer resources. A couple
strolls by our bench, keeping their hands in place—

in their pockets. We meet in Renmin Park, no place
to meet. The great outdoors! Up the geese fly,
avoiding this frozen lake, these shivering couples.
Circumspect, we talk. Only our eyes go crazy,
we're decorous beyond belief. How Chinese
I feel, repressing my feeling. Pretending pleases

the patriarchal *we*, stabilizes stability. I please
no *one* but all society, that monolithic place
where no one resides (not me, not a single Chinese),
and order prevails. Except that there's always a fly
in the ointment. Love raising its crazy
head, demanding lectures on Freud—and a couple

of days ago a student kissed me. A couple
of decades from now you and I may meet (please
bring champagne, forget Confucius), go crazy
in Singapore, Tahiti, Mexico City, some place
where you can get a private room, fly
in the face of the Nineteenth Century. Meanwhile the Chinese

coast is not clear. Couples, please take your place
in line. Forget propinquity, sublimate like crazy.
Good friend, I'm not Chinese and I must fly.