

Sun · *Ai Qing*

From the graveyard of the distant past
From the age of darkness
From where humanity flows toward extinction
Stunning the sleepy mountain ranges
Like a wheel of fire that rolls over a sand dune
The sun spins toward me

With irrepressible brilliance
It forces life to breathe out, forces
The countless branches of tall trees to dance toward it
And the river's wild song

When it comes, I hear
The hibernating pupae turn in the earth
People in the broad square calling out in loud voices
And far off, cities
Summoning it with electricity and steel

When my heart is forced open by the flame's hand
And my stale, desiccated soul
Is left behind at the brink of the river

Then I shall believe in the birth of mankind

translated by Marilyn Chin