

Poetry from François Luong

written by Guest Contributor | February 5, 2015



These are the places. The coastlines contract, the landscape traced with lines of steel rails, wood planks and rivets. The gravel mound grows as it goes forward. Wood planks delineate the line, going straight. Steel rivets puncture the soil. Steel lines document the landscape. Digging. The striation marks the territory. Through mountains, rivers, and plains, until the line is stopped. The line never stops. What the turn names. A cliff. The face of the cliff exposes a series of sedimented layers. The line erodes the edge of the cliff. A bridge. A crossing. From edge to edge and beyond edges. The sunburnt face prone creates a shade. The back arched contracts, standing straight, and falls again. What the fall documents. In repetition. From edge to edge, until the line crosses.

These are the names. The repetition of rivets puncturing the soil carries along the side of the gravel mound. Knees bent. Back straight. Chin down. Arms up. Hands gripping. The stance collapses on one side of the line, then the other. The body rises again, hands first, and collapses repeatedly. The weight of the sledgehammer describes an arc stopped only by the soil and the head of the rivet. They keep on walking along the line the back arched as the line keeps growing. The line never stops. The end of the row moves to the front. Over and over. From the first rivet seeded into the soil. Staining the soil in invisible ink.

Of gesture. Below the horizon line. The door opens into the dark of the tunnel, feet dragging through calcite dust and dropping water. The notion of overture as it is enacted through the site of a cliff. The chisel echoes against the wall. How gravel comes about as relic of repeated gestures. Stones. After drilling. After carrying across. After the nail goes through the plank. There he collapsed. There the body was left, away from the cliff face. On knees.

Speaking across the gutter. Stepping across the gutter. He believed he heard her apostrophe. The intersection of the bridge, hand in hand. Drilling in and drilling in. Drilling. Through layers of sediments. Of epithelia. The hairline cracks on the planks spread from the feet to the base of the skull. The bridge closes off the straight. Suspended. The face of the cliff documents how gravel comes about.

Tethered to the ground with rivets

Seven parallel twigs hovering over the asphalt. Stains of rust marking lines on the bark. The wound shows no sign of rot. Looking out through the glass enclosure. This is a story of ways, of rails. This is a story of trajectories, of mesh and fabrics carried over. Map coordinates and coordinates of memory. What will come. A white dress shirt hangs over the backrest. She writes of a double-door entrance.



Originally from Strasbourg, François Luong lives in San Francisco. A poet and translator, notably of Esther Tellermand, François Turcot, and Rémi Froger, his poems and translations have appeared in *Aufgabe*, *New American Writing*, *Lit*, *Typo*, *Verse*, and elsewhere.