

# Monday Without a Wheelchair

A mother tongue awakes, closing the door to another dream  
an old suitcase looks at me with Sunday mornings displayed

Ama no longer around, would water her kidneys to the end  
A morning tree grows up to the sky, waiting for a mother bird

Leaving home, Sunday grabbed the suitcase, instead of a wheelchair

Long ago, my prayer running off with me,  
my right I mustn't know before being told

If I confine them in the hands,  
one day off may be granted like magic  
turning a white handkerchief into a dove

I close my eyes and hear a thought flying with no wings—  
Don't you want some Filipino cosmetics?

Tirelessly stare around, hired by anxiety

Across from a pile of cosmetics, passes by  
a half-painted siren with red and blue

The suitcase ought to clam up  
but a laugh escapes

While mimicking a fruitless tree, we've known:  
happiness is not fruits, but roots

The empty suitcase is packed with the evening glow  
it's time the wheels start rolling out of illegal hours

Street talk floats through earphones, knocking the window

My phone folded in fantasy, waiting for my child to appear

Ama drinks water even in dreams,

After she died, I had a dream in Chinese for the first time

Looking at the suitcase displaying the evening, I ask—

What do you all do on Monday when you have nothing but time?

\* Notes: Ama means “grandmother” in Hokkien (a language commonly spoken in Taiwan). The term is widely used even among non-family members to refer to an older lady. The number of foreign workers caring for the elderly and patients in Taiwan exceeds 200,000, and still, they are fighting for one day off a week and an increase in the minimum wage (around USD 570 a month as of 2022).

Translated by Phil Lee and Naomi Goddard