

JINJIA LI

*translated by Jiaoyang Li and Kate Costello*

*from Icarus' Labyrinth*

4.

The only use for cell phones is the flashlight. The signal is terrible in my basement. Nothingness is like a Chinese city at dusk.

36.

May fourth, another package is returned. I didn't send it. There's English on the invoice. The recipient: CHINA.

55.

Even in the most complicated Labyrinth, I can immediately find a downhill path.

17.

For a time, everyone put on a mask, picked up a long-focus lens and raised their faces to the sky in the Labyrinth of the plague.

18.

Harbin Labyrinth: Labyrinth of Ice Lanterns, March. The ice has disappeared, leaving only the lanterns.

35.

Refused. The paper money burned for Qingming Festival was returned on May first, Labor Day. Half ash, no embers, sulfur dioxide. I clearly remember the elegant handwriting in the remarks column: "Have checked this person, but they do not exist."

49.

The hell in the Labyrinth: the little hell of translation. Every thought that arises in your heart disappears in other people's mouths. From mother tongue to mother tongue, there is no room for hesitation in the Labyrinth. Winter's little hell of translation: an ice slide in the icy snow world, the world record. The first half ice, the second half iron. Always built into a great Great Wall, always stuck a small red flag in the bulwark. Closed-off steps: children-only slide. We boarded the beacon and descended in a row. The latter covered the former's eyes with their hands: the more people, the safer it is. Are you covered? All ready. Woo! Being freed, exposed to tumultuous reflections, along the crust of the Songhua river, sliding into all directions, until it runs into the wall, gentle with its remaining speed. The desperate composite ladder surpassed last year's 365-meter Guinness record, twelve overpass slopes, great loop-back of downhill snow tubes. The outsider must seek monopoly and board it: he can only shield his own eyes.

He can only rely on the orbiting flash of understanding, the piercingly cold and purposeless circling, knowing that the body has already slipped out of the stairway. Only then could he loosen his hands in the recovered lowland, his section of the corridor looking to both sides. Of course, it all depends on self-awareness. Only with self-awareness is he allowed to be an outsider, to exist in this series of icy snow experiential projects, to slip to the end with one vote.

1.

There is no Labyrinth without self-transcendence.

-1.

There is no Labyrinth without the desire for self-transcendence. There is no Labyrinth without a desire to transcend this desire. As dusk fell, I returned from the empty Leyouyuan Plateau to the will of Chang'An.

46.

Bronze for a week. Lecherous for a generation of women. Decadent music of the bronze age. Love song nineteen eighty-four. Together Again. Bronze one star. A tightening screw on the Indian Ocean. An old star. Nostalgic star. Broken in one nudge. A white dwarf star. On the burning Tuesday. Bronze relies on fire, melding together to bear the pain. Bronze corridor. Clanging, clamorous ping pong. Someone wants to steal chestnuts from the fire. White dwarf phoenix. White phoenix egg. Touch its ass. Dig it out – clanging, clamorous as it ping-pongs into the molten hot bronze corridor. Bronze Sunday. The white dwarf suicides. Ashes of white dwarf stretched. Pong. Bronze cavernous body blooms. Bronze Nightdays. Listen to the bronze leaves in the bronze wind for the first time. Listen to the silent film groan for the first time. Then calm down. Turn on all the lights. Shuffle your clogs. Squat in your garage for a long time. Spray the genitals with penetrating fluid. Wipe the shadows with lubricating oil. White dwarf shadows. The whiter, the dwarfer, the shadowier. Pong. The bronze wall blooms and bears fruit.

13.

The Labyrinth is the other shore that you have reached unconsciously. It had to be unconscious. The rivers that you stepped into the second time before you stepped in for the first time will overwhelm you.