



Mae Yway

မယ်ယွေ

Mae Yway (b. 1991) is from Myeik, a coastal city on the Andaman Sea, in Myanmar's far south. Adopting contemporary language poetry - influenced above all by Zeyar Lynn, she is one of the leading young women poets in Myanmar today.

When did you move to Yangon? My family moved when I was nine years old. I had culture shock. People laughed at our Myeik accent. I didn't dare talk to people except for two or three friends. I didn't dare speak in public: a feeling I have to this day. I'm afraid and shake all over when I recite my poetry in public.

When did you start writing poetry? As a teenager. When I read a poem in a magazine, I wanted to write one of my own. I didn't know you needed to study how to write. I just wrote down my emotions. But you can't just write something down. You need to create it. Poetry has to be composed, so it will be beautiful. And not just poetry - for example, cooking is also an art. Cooking and combining ingredients is also creation. It's also art. You should study every part of it. How does an onion taste if you add another ingredient? So, when you create a poem, you have to know other poems.

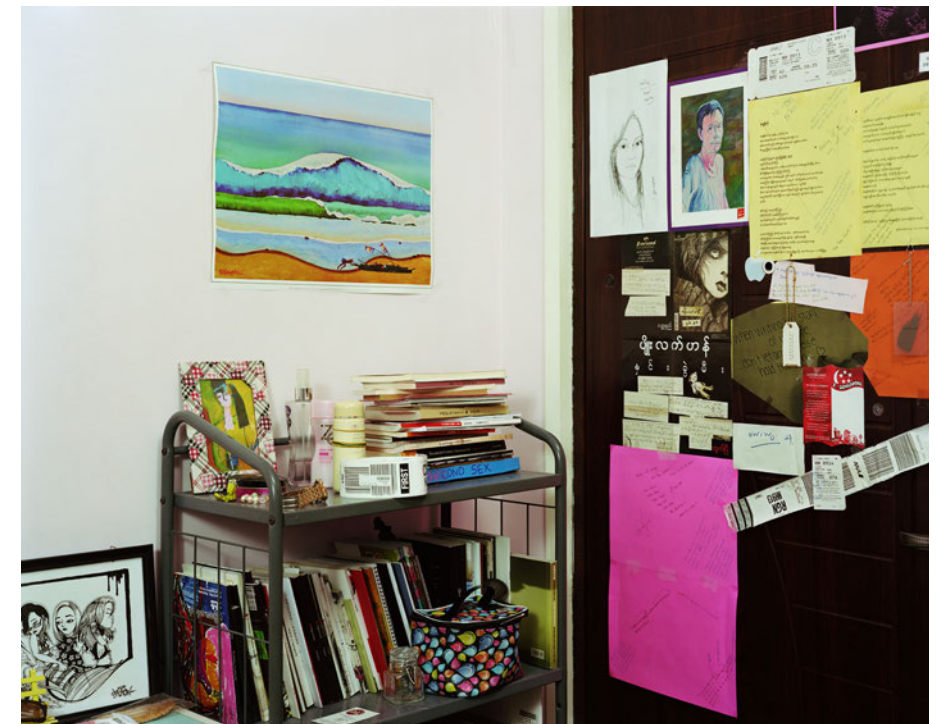
At school, we were taught art is something useless, what losers do: if you are inclined to art, you will starve. That was the message to young students. I wanted to write



poetry, but none of my friends were interested in poetry. We studied poetry at school, but no one had respect for it.

And politics? The military government made young people indifferent to politics. Most of my friends are still not interested in politics at all. Of course, now with the new democratic government, the word "politics" has become popular, heard everywhere. Now some care about politics, some don't. It's a chaotic time.

You wear your resistance on your skin – covered in tattoos. I liked tattoos since I was four



or five years old. But I only had the courage to start tattooing in my twenties. Most people look badly on those who have tattoos. Some people think I have tattoos – and do other things – like drinking and smoking – to show I can do whatever men can. But I don't have gender differentiation in mind. I do it because I want to and like it.

And you are looking for a similar freedom in your relationships? I will have a relationship with whoever is okay with me, whether man or woman. Right now, I prefer girls. They are better at relationships. People around me say it's disgusting that I hang out with girls, telling me not to reverse nature. I ask them: what is nature? You have the right to choose. If you are just following what others do, your life has no meaning. You have your own life, your own existence. You have to go with your own thinking. If not, go back to the military government.

What do you do for a living? I worked as an airline customer service agent for the last two years. When I came home, work was still in my head, dissatisfaction and anger too. I couldn't read and write. I became depressed. The only thing I saved during those two years was money. And blank paper. No poetry. No thinking. So I quit. I will find something else.

What place does poetry have in your life? Poetry is not the most important thing. But it's congruent with me. If I can't write poetry I will be depressed and lose hope to live. Poetry is me. It's inside me. So, as long as I exist, poetry will exist. If there is no me, there is no poetry.



၂၀ မှာ ၁နှစ် ပေါင်းဦးမယ့် သူမ

၂၀ မှာ ၁နှစ် ပေါင်းဦးမယ့် သူမ
သူ့ဆီသွားမယ့် ညာခြေ(လှမ်း)တိုင်း ဘရိတ်ကို ဖြည်းဖြည်းလေးလေးအုပ်။
အကွေ့တိုင်းမှာ
ဂီယာချိန်းပါ
ဟွန်းတီးပါ
နောက်ကားကြည့်ပါ နောက်ကား အမြဲကြည့်နေရတာ။
သူ့ခေါ်ကိုယ်ခေါ် လမ်းတစ်ဝက်မှာ တိုက်မိ လဲကျသွားတဲ့ တယ်လီဖုန်း ဆက်သွယ်မှုများ
ဒီဆိုဟို ဟိုဆိုဒီ အချိန်တန်အိမ်ပြန် လေကြောင်းလိုင်းများ
ဆိုက်ရောက်ခရီးသည်များ၊ ထွက်ခွာခရီးသည်များ၊ အားလုံးခရီးသည်များ။
ဘောင်းဘီတိုတို စကတ်တိုလို ဖော်မပင်ဘူးဆိုတာ
ဘောင်းဘီတိုကို တိုင်ပွတ် ကနေတဲ့ ဟန်နီတို့လို ယေဘုယျအားဖြင့်ထဲ
အတင်းထည့်ဖို့ မကြိုးစားနဲ့ဆိုတာ
ဘောင်းဘီတို အိတ်ကပ်ထဲ ကဗျာအမြဲပါတာ။
ရေးသမျှ မင်ရေထွက်ပြီး မှင်သေသေရေးထွက်ဖို့ ဆူညံသံကို
အသက်ရှူသံ တစ်မျိုးသာ ကျန်တဲ့အထိ
လျော့ချ အားလုံးကိုဒါပဲ ချော့မှာ ဆိတ်ဆိတ်နေခြင်းနဲ့ အာရံတယ်။
အစုလိုက် အပြုံလိုက်တက်လာပြီး အစုလိုက် အပြုံလိုက် ဆုတ်ခွာသွားတတ်ကြတဲ့
ကံတရားဟာ
မကျွမ်းဘဲကိုင်ရင် အကုန်ကျွမ်းသွားမယ့် ဆားကပ်အပိုင်းအစတွေ
အခန်းထောင့်မှာ
ညရေးညတာ ဆီးအိုးလိုပဲ ကဗျာရေးကဗျာတာ
ညမီးကို တောက်ခနဲ တောက်ခနဲ ဖွင့်ပိတ်သံမှာ
ဘယ်သူက တစ်ရေးနီးမှာမှ မဟုတ်တာ
စရွေ့ စရွေ့ကတည်းက တစ်ယောက်ခန်းပဲလေ
(လက်ခုပ်သံ)
သူမ ရွတ်ရင်းတန်းလန်း တစ်ထောက်နား။ တံတွေးမျိုချတာကို
လက်ခုပ်တီးကြတယ်။ အဲဒီအခန်းအကြောင်း
ဘယ်အထိ ဆက်မှာလဲလို့ သူမကို အော်ပြောခဲ့တယ်။ အစီအစဉ်အရ လက်ခုပ်သံဆို
ဆက်မတီးနဲ့တော့။ သူမ ထွက်ပျောက်သွားတာ အတော်လေးကြာပြီ ပြီး
နောက်ဆုံးတစ်ကြောင်းကို မရေးခဲ့ဘူးလေ ။ ။

မယ်ယွေး

She who is going to be twenty plus one

She is going to be twenty plus one.
On her way to him, she gently presses the brake pedal
With her right foot, changes the gear and honks the horn.
“Watch out for cars behind you”, she says to herself.
Telephone calls crash into each other and collapse midway.
Wayward airplanes finally land home.
Passengers come in and out, and everyone’s a passenger.
Hot pants, or miniskirts, but don’t reveal your ass.
Don’t throw all girls in the same category as pole dancers.
She always carries her poetry in her hot pants.
She writes in style with everything that spurts ink,
And everything she writes spurts ink in style.
Reduce the noise until there’s nothing but the sound of breath.
Her quietism is her resistance.
The same karmic reactions that come at you en mass
Will retreat from you en mass.
Circuit boards can burn if you handle them without expertise.
She gets up and writes poems like the potty in a corner.
The click-clack of the light switch will not wake anyone.
She chose a single room and moved in alone.
(applause)
She just pauses to swallow her saliva,
But the crowd cheers.
Someone in the crowd hollers:
“How long will you be going on about that room?”
She tells the crowd to stop the applause if it is part of the program.
Now, she’s been gone for a while, and she didn’t finish the last line.

Mae Yway

Translated by Maung Day



Su Yint

ဆူးရင့်

Su Yint (b. 1974) is a Buddhist monk and a poet. A combination which has an ancient pedigree in Myanmar, where some of the most famous poets in the country were Buddhist monks.

How did you become a monk? I was born in Sagain Division, Thazin Town. My mother passed away when I was six. I went to a monastic school. I became a novice monk when I was thirteen. It's not usual for a child that age to enter a monastery as a novice. It was a fun experience. We were forty novices in the monastery in my hometown.

I then continued straight on into monkhood – without returning to lay life after being a novice as many do – at the age of fifteen. I am over forty now.

And poetry? At the age of fifteen, I started writing some religious poems, then sonnets in the classical style. Around 1997, modernism arrived here. At first, I could not transition to the modern style easily. Rhymes were still stubbornly stuck in my head and I even thought modernism is not real poetry. I slowly learned to accept modern forms of poetry and started writing them myself at age seventeen. But I was not published back then yet.



What is the biggest difficulty of being a monk? I don't find it difficult. I have ready access to the four basic necessities: a robe to wear, meals to eat, a place to stay, and medicine. There are plenty of donors for our monastery. So I am contented, teaching and writing.

A monk cuts himself off from worldly things. But you busy yourself with these very things as a poet. It is not easy dealing with these two values. Yet even Buddha himself composed his sermons as poetry, with strict adherence to composition and diction.

Inspiration can lead to fantasy and that is against the monk's code. How do you deal with that? Sometimes, I get lost in romantic fantasies while composing poetry about love. But I write from a third person point of view, not a first person point of view. Although I am a monk, I am also still human. So I do have human fantasy. But I think of poetic inspiration as a very minor transgression.

Of course, I am not as free as a layman poet. But I take that limitation on freedom as a healthy challenge.

One of your poems is called "Attachment". Can you explain the title? Attachment - Than Yaw Zin - is a string attached to yourself and a particular subject. It's a form of bondage. If you can cut that bondage, you will become free. But if you become entangled in that



web of attachment, you will never be free. You must cut yourself free from these things. They are basically strings you've attached to yourself.

That is the Buddhist concept - freeing oneself from attachment. But it is universally applicable to all human beings regardless of religion.

I wish all my readers to be healthy in mind and body. May you all reach the state of ever-lasting truth.



သံယောဇဉ်

ဖြတ်သူက ဖြတ်
ဆက်သူက ဆက်
ဖြတ်/ဆက် ဆက်/ဖြတ်
ဒီစကား နှစ်လုံးမှာ
ဖြတ်သူသာ အောင်နိုင်ပြီး
ဆက်သူတွေ ကျရှုံးရတဲ့
ကြိုး .. ။ ။

ဆူးရင့်

Attachment

Some cut it.
Some connect it.

Cut. Connect.
Connect. Cut.

Who detaches succeeds.
Who attaches loses.

Su Yint