

Icicle Glasses / Day Thirty-Nine
from The Autobiography of Death
Kim Hyesoon

2018

translated by Don Mee Choi

The thing that death gave you—
your face leaks
your face overflows

Your face is the grave of your nose
your face is the grave of your ears
your face is the grave of your face
once again your face overflows uncontrollably

The subzero temperature grows on your face then dies
(You were underground from the moment you were born)

The air that sticks to your eyes is as cold as the knife blade
the wind that sticks to your heart is as hot as the palm of a hand

You want to shout that you miss me
but there is another ground beneath the ground

You wish to sing solo but you are stuck in the chorus
In this world there is no ear that can make out your voice

Love sickness, the chronic illness of the ghosts!
Love sickness appears daily like the first dawn!

You hang your eyeballs to the ground and plead
You beg to be let in
To have your face overlap with my face
That my tongue is your tongue
That you shed my tears

Water streams out
You hallucinate
You go mad

Saint Martin's Four Wishes
unknown

13th C.

translated by Ned Dubin

In Normandy there lived a peasant
of whom is told so quaint and pleasant
a fabliau that I've a notion
to tell you. Such was his devotion
to Saint Martin that he'd invoke
him in all things he undertook;
whether elated or depressed,
it was Saint Martin he addressed;
every day he called on Saint Martin.
The peasant set out on a certain
morning, as was his wont, to plow.
He'll not forget Saint Martin now.
"Saint Martin!" he cried out, "giyyup!"
and that's when Saint Martin showed
up.

"Peasant," he said, "you have been loyal
to me, and never start to toil,
no matter what your task may be,
without first calling upon me.
You have well earned my special favor.
Now leave your harrow, drop your labor,
and get you home with a light heart,
for I will truly do my part
and herewith promise I will grant
whatever four wishes you want,
but use your wishes wisely, for
once they've been used you'll get no
more."

The peasant bowed low to the ground
in reverence, then turned around
and hurried home walking on air.

There's trouble waiting for him there.
His wife, the one who wears the pants,
lit into him: "What evil chance
brings you home now, oaf? Did you quit
work 'cause it's clouded up a bit?
You've hours of daylight left for tilling.
Or is your paunch in need of filling?
Are you afraid you'll miss your chow?
You've never taken to the plow,
no-life for you is one big lark!
We may as well sell off the stock
since you won't work them anyway!
See what you call a working day—
you're back when you have scarcely
gone!"

"Don't be upset, my love, keep calm,"
the peasant said. "Our fortune's made!
Henceforth our burdens may be laid
aside, of that much I am certain,
because I met up with Saint Martin.
He gave me four wishes to use
as I thought best. I've yet to choose;
I meant first to consult with you,
and as you advise me to do
I now intend to make my wishes
for gold and silver, land and riches."
When she heard this, the woman
reached

to hug him and toned down her speech.
"Husband," she said, "can this be so?"
"Indeed yes, as you soon will know."

"My dearest, sweetest love," said she, "my heart is yours eternally to love and serve you hand and foot. You should repay me good for good. I ask you, please, to let me have one of the wishes the saint gave. You still will have the other three, and you will have done right by me." "Hush," he replied, "my darling wife! I wouldn't, no, not on my life, for women all have addled brains. Why, you might ask to have three skeins of hemp or wool or linen thread! I remember Saint Martin said that I should wisely use my wishes and only wish for something such as will benefit us evermore, so I intend to use all four. Know that I'm mortally afraid, if I gave you one, that instead you'd wish for something that might do untold harm to both me and you. If you should wish I was a bear or jackass, or a goat or mare, I would become one on the spot. I know how much you love me: not. That's why I fear to let you share my wishes." "Sir," she said, "I swear in good faith with both hands raised high, you'll stay a peasant till you die. I'll never wish you other than you are, dearer than any man." "My dear," he said, "let it be yours. By God, when you wish, make a choice by which you and I stand to gain!" "I wish," she said, "that, in God's name, there spring up penises galore over your body, aft and fore!

On face, arms, sides, from head to foot, may countless penises take root, and let them not be limp or slack: let each be furnished with its sack, and let them stand stiff and upright! Now, won't you be a horny sight!" Then, as soon as the woman spoke, hundreds of pricks began to poke out all over. Penises grew around his nose and his mouth, too. Some pricks were thick, some oversized, some long, some short, some circumcised, curved pricks, straight pricks, pointed and hardy... every bone in the peasant's body was miraculously endowed and prickled, fully-cocked and proud. You've never heard wonders like these! Pricks grow out of his ears, and he's amidst his forehead, standing tall, the most enormous prick of all, and right down to his feet he's coated with penises erect and bloated. From toe to crown he was bedecked with antlers, bloated and erect. Weighed down by penis upon penis, the peasant said, "This wish was heinous! Why give me all this finery? Better to be stillborn than be with pricks so overgrown and cluttered! Was ever any man so studded?" "Husband," she said, "I'll tell you why. Your one prick couldn't satisfy, just hanging limply like a fox stole, but now I've a wealth of cocks! Your lot is likewise much improved

in that, whenever you are moved to travel, you won't be assessed tariffs or tolls. All for the best I made my wish, so don't resent it. There's not a creature half so splendid!" The peasant said, "I'm not amused. Three wishes more are yet unused. I wish," the fellow said at once, "that you had just as many cunts on you as I have pricks on me. May your cunts pop out rapidly!" At once the cunts start to arise. A pair appears before her eyes, four on her forehead in a row, and cunts above, and cunts below, and cunts behind, and cunts in front, every variety of cunt—bent cunts, straight cunts, cunts gray and hoary, cunts without hair, cunts thick and furry, and virgin cunts, narrow and tight, wide, gaping cunts, and cunts made right, cunts large and small, oval and round, deep cunts, and cunts raised on a mound, cunts on her head, cunts on her feet... the peasant's joy is now complete. "Husband, what have you done?" said she. "Why have you wished this thing on me?" The good man said, "One cunt won't do for all the pricks I got from you. Don't be alarmed, for your condition will lead to widespread recognition: when you go walking, you'll continue to be known for all the cunt in you." "Husband," she said, "what can I say?

That makes two wishes thrown away, and now you must use one to fix us and remove these cunts and pricks. You'll still have one left out of four, and we'll be rich forevermore." The peasant wishes thereupon that all their cunts and pricks were gone, but she was anything but cheered to find her cunt had disappeared, and he, too, had an awful shock to find himself without a cock. Both of them were extremely wroth. "Husband, it's time to make the fourth wish we have left to us," said she; "one prick for you, one cunt for me. We'll return to our former state no poorer off, at any rate." He wished the wish that still remained; and thus he neither lost nor gained: he got his prick back at the cost of the four wishes, which he lost.