

Seoul  
Bus  
Poems

**Also by Jim Goar**

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*Whole Milk* (Effing Press, 2006)



# Seoul Bus Poems

1711

Jim Goar

REALITY STREET

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*Jim Goar*



*for Sang-yeon*





I don't want to write  
about leaves. The change in  
seasons. my love. Instead:

The bell at 4:44 and by five.  
silent. again. You've heard  
it. Rain. Nothing poetic about  
"she slept"

without a mother. a father. a mother. two brothers

4:01.  
The monk begins to sing  
"Good morning"

Not all bumpkins live in China



A lonely deacon  
is hardly necessary for us  
to cuddle full and belching  
stars from afar  
roll over and sleep with no  
home I burrow constantly  
meaningless I hope  
the moon for lack of bananas  
cramps that exhibitionist  
can't be explained away



Witch doctors do not flinch  
they run the city conjuring doves  
and the doves are present and  
on spindly legs  
in the groin we call lice  
holy in flight chasing down  
the diminutive red and megaphones full of  
chants on strike and workers left  
to be mucked up pilgrims or  
baffled Mohicans dancing around  
and around  
the lip makes good crystal sing



requiring this world  
of short sight  
to  
sit  
down  
the Olympics are  
out the window  
and I'm  
watching yr neck  
in languages and  
have only  
two eyes  
for  
taxonomy  
emits  
reception  
a finely tuned retention  
a Christmas carol boom



There must be something  
on this mountain  
top spinning  
dizzy mewing  
thirsty as hell  
in sight of the ridge we  
crawl in ports  
of entry catch only  
what others give can't  
be shellfish with ornaments obscure  
all motives in the rain  
like chameleon skin blossom



Crocodile blood drawn  
tight coils under pillows the  
exhale will not  
come ashamed or  
still innocent she  
says white I don't argue  
socks need not scurvy  
with a pack of wildebeests  
running tatanka hands  
my ears are soft horns and my owner  
at two o'clock is not my owner at three  
blocks of western migration  
lemon rubbed teeth of cicadas  
without venom she whispers  
reptiles behind the knee





So what if bald turkeys stole your wedding dress  
My darling  
You look nice in that hospital gown.  
And remembering your mother's scrambled eggs  
But not her face  
Isn't so strange;  
Her eggs were good  
And you have your father's eyes.  
Just do me a favor, my suicidal rose  
And get off the ledge  
You'll kill the dirt if you fall.



I'm tired of  
the zoo

looking for my darling dear  
when I cry,  
"Koo koo ka koo."

you don't

If acorns were sweet  
squirrels would be candy  
and squirrels are not  
in the trees  
from the west  
constellation that I love

lay me a parrot down  
inside your warmest door



The washing machine  
and no water the poem  
without a bird without  
Hae-yeon my darling the OJ is  
warm and my coffee is no help

I live next to a  
monastery bell that rings  
33 times before sunrise  
and 28 times at five

“the tutor’s prince-nez lies upon yr  
daughter’s white breast”

I have forgotten so many lines this winter



The skin remembers how she crossed  
and went away unpacked and stayed  
where old times hang and spin  
above a summer plane to thrust and fall  
to dusk in early night she formed a couch  
no longer heard  
the oars of season shake and then  
and out the sun at five o'clock  
threw blind and shadows on my door  
a strand of hair and reason break  
the bindings of my nevermore



                    Ensconced  
in the  
bus                    coughs  
and I turn to  
a barber shop      widow  
  
smoke inside      snow tomorrow  
  
                    scalding  
  
cane and crane  
reminders to shave  
  
                    everywhere I look  
  
This same corset  
these same signs  
  
inhaler and your breath  
and your breath is yours  
  
the seat is mine

20 million people live in this corner of my heart

I'm black I've turned my  
head a torso manikin  
who's dropped my stare

manikin manikin

wined and dined

in sooth      my mouth  
in blood      hot wood



If you didn't know  
better  
you'd say  
something dead  
lives in there  
when you know  
nothing of the sort  
ever does  
in the rain  
what it feigns  
in the sun



My wallet is on  
the floor  
carefully  
bend town

before

sun  
became  
crass

a plane  
shadow  
a bus  
shallow

a passenger

leaves

the curb

the street

if a crosswalk provides  
if your eye sprouts roots  
and those roots sprout atoms in ether

be still

means stay

while other wrists

twist  
& mop

the light and love

an illustrated bird  
more than the kind that crows.





Fair women

not painted    manger    find

to hide

this story explains

men ride buses  
while men    ride buses

men

never move                      the widow  
the same seat    and pen

shirts cost more    one day                      then the next

Opera of Korea

fish in the store    window

red lights

and around

more  
red lights



This man of mud and marrow  
decides to question the street  
for no one walks  
anymore they stroll with cranes  
and hats removed an orange  
poncho in empty flowers  
that golden wake across the lawn  
breaking little rakes akimbo  
tree and mermaid song  
a map under glass remembering



There is a list of names  
outside my window.

In Changsha my name.  
By noon the wall was  
white again.

Nouns hang  
from globes outside

my window. a list  
of names outside  
my window.

my name. the wall was  
white again.

Nouns hang  
from globes outside  
my window.

the wall. a name  
was white again.



The urge to speak about. rain.  
just because. it is.  
right now. as we. It  
is. raining. raining. I could  
tell you. the Coltrane.  
the coffee. who knows? there is.  
what did. that sound.



Constipation is an  
occupation of wilting  
umbrellas are never there  
when you need them weeping  
in the trestle a camera hidden is a  
still daisy of remembrance that  
black card played when lights  
sleep we rest this journey  
lies with paper instead of toes



sheets all filled with lemon  
snow and everything is children  
from the plant we tend music  
of statues drip home open window  
sleds of glass bird whose name  
we do not know melt back and  
forth in the tub a ducky quackady  
quack on the bed you need another  
shower of snow blue flower parted  
this music is closest to German



Drummer. monk. my first coffee.  
why all the noise? we are anxious  
together. barking dog.

My room is behind the curtains. Good morning.  
drapes are closed. Potholders. If I looked outside  
I'd know. A funeral.

Five thousand Buddhas live next door.  
I have not visited. them. they are  
statues. milk cartons in the window.  
wind and the absence of tin drums.



It is always today,  
full of clarinets and coffins.  
To a man  
we answer telephones  
afraid. We answer doorbells  
instead of hiding. We accept “bonjour”  
for “hello”  
when they are not the same  
at all.





The table has set  
behind the hill and  
at our feet full bellied  
rest has eroded  
speaking is done  
on records a crow  
asks so we are sure  
to be breathing the last  
of something inward a  
cap screwed tight  
an alarm in remission



Neither happy  
nor fat bones  
are waiting the dark  
minced dry as the wish  
broken tables and flowers  
remember the one who  
is not more food for ghosts  
will starve without the living to serve



What's skin  
today may not be

tomorrow's huskers  
are growing today's

bits of no  
always say  
no

globes hang until  
they don't

I am sure of the dust

my phone should ring.  
anytime. you call



Meet you at time frozen  
behind this door closed  
to those who live  
an empty circus a prowling  
chameleon somehow warm  
fades as do all words smaller  
than a penny ring for the dead



While he plucked blues  
she inserted a church  
bell into his fiddle  
to say that his tongue would not  
be accurate or wine or just  
playing with a room  
around the loins and nothing else  
was more like a brown  
recluse in the pews one stocking  
curfew I must get home  
curfew I must I must  
get home to curfew the bell  
has sounded curfew my love  
has sounded twelve times



Turn the egg over  
it's still an egg  
burn the egg over  
and no one gets hurt.

spatula and the trash  
played Sunday night

Men do not come till morning.



A pigeon broke its neck  
against the cock of Ralph  
the embalmer lapsed  
displayed flowers  
ate feathers and then the dish was  
smashed up was swept up was  
by taxidermy mounted from  
trash reborn into a city  
with cars on freeways and glue  
to date eligible birds  
or chicks if you must dance  
heel to toe  
in the background of a silent  
picture eloping in early spring



a twist  
a turn  
  
here  
  
a goose  
    there a goose  
        and goose  
feel  
  
                    not the dead kind  
                    not the fish hung  
  
                nor  
                syllables  
            the whitest light  
            a fist holds  
yet still  
    my hair falls  
  
        complaints  
  
                I'd like to apologize  
                (and do)  
                for dirty Hanes  
bananas left up  
    hostess cards  
        grown old          a turn  
  
                    pumping break  
                        a turn  
to the right  
        green bride  
            by my side



candlestick in the study

turn out the lights

no need to put

good money  
after bad



There is no connection  
between tomatoes and poets  
and in light of this may I  
rest a moment while tradition  
shuffles like vegetables to raise  
yr leg the stream continues  
under bridges while bridges land  
on this garden with only one eye



The blood will come and go  
as children will go  
out of the hamlet by a flute  
played once upon a time  
for style is straight or slightly bent  
souls follow crumbs to the hut  
where the oven is with tasty children  
wrung dry of echoes the town falls silent  
hails never weaken corn  
shrugged and lost its yellow its  
green a fire consumed  
our houses of redemption



Words and now the silence  
remains in blue slacks pressed  
lemon and belly laughs  
between a lover and his daughter  
is her mother his lover  
for crows to pick  
a sieve from water dice  
roll little boy yr brother  
lost but no one calls to empty  
crumbs along the way



The sand has moored  
us we watch we  
drift mostly we drift  
in this sand watching  
through eyes waiting to find  
room outside waiting circling  
still circling and everyone still



Today deserves pause  
between still when read  
a turtle beginning the girl outside  
this slow drawl  
just walking not strolling birds eating  
interest is better kept curious words  
stopped around goodbye



A ground the bend she climbs  
buxom and apples in baskets  
the collected breath of longing  
when bouquets no longer will do  
anymore is fateful as dice  
in waiting you are the numbers  
in heat you are the voice of citrus  
she picks four moons to bake  
a Japanese lantern on the table  
predicates a ground hog in the den



The scope  
a circumference

so full of grace

a green light and I've  
no start at all

a biodegradable fist  
and silk for shade

come sup with me

a dusty floor

where no one stands  
where

laundry dries

the bones inside  
a thrush a kite

ears bend the shelf

and inside shoes and  
outside hands

a can of corn  
a can of corn  
a can of corn





Her vanity not her modesty  
in question is always what  
is your name and number two  
came up and this was  
the second take so  
she let me get away with  
my advances  
filled with little people  
you can imagine  
the mess so I won't  
bother a weeping soldier or  
accost the demarcation line



How did knees  
touching dark these joints  
come running

step

ain't got no  
that ain't

mechanics of the head  
swivel  
round  
some words sans gin  
imply

toes  
better than any  
at the end  
of a song  
who'll shine my shoes

white spit

good pie



You were telling me about  
the cliff behind the fence  
you've seen the echo but  
not the fall into the ocean  
one foot at a time and the pants  
will never come unless  
you relax your monkey will  
remain a coconut and sunshine  
is all a man needs  
in a tender heterosexual way off  
where only the hounds go baying  
at night the horses are eaten  
questions asked by those  
who stumble over rocks and  
broken legs spring forth from  
my beard my woman lives for this  
rescue but I am not nor  
do I need another



Divine night  
look at me running between  
rooms on lights turning off  
the darkness I pause to look at  
snow empty of something  
I have in hand cannot be  
an oak my bruised love



open a door  
good neighbor

you should be  
asleep

all night  
through silk walls

the worm

inside  
half under

my alarm clock

while rain  
white rain

tunnels

beneath  
the floor



No secret.

garden.

in the rain.

transparent.

waiting for

what passes for

classical music

these days



The hummingbird in preference  
a twig behind the daisy  
prosaic and the clock is falling  
letters those fuzzy red flowers  
of no particular echo  
through dunes heard a moment too  
late rising in the brook  
a moment too long  
then away over morning weirs  
hardly brighter than sugar cubes floating  
plastic red waters the lawn



I haven't stepped outside. today.  
I have no idea. if the drummer is.  
waiting. that. was my loving. hand.  
sincerely. the dawn.





If you need a man  
walking white on water  
you must be an island  
hung out to dry  
to sleep with one and  
the other picking  
secrets from the trunk  
of dancing fingers bent  
in gates where elephant  
want the man to free  
bananas and the ceiling  
to look just at the sky



There is more space than blue  
can hold. a hedge of lemon  
a bookmark in mold.  
these  
two things appear  
to appear  
by glutinous  
and prancer  
by  
sexton \ the language  
wears down  
the well  
of rugs  
dissemble  
my memory is shoddy  
and I  
have lost  
the train  
is bleating  
ink  
an eye  
to eye  
a bride





Someone else      can freeze  
    sunlight

perfect day

twilight till  
    dark  
    sent home

look at me  
I've forgotten to shave

until now

money would buy

you  
this head to call

and what you call

day  
after day

my beating heart

a scent  
I've never smelled



Beware the disconnect  
between need and movement  
cars parked

in the road  
there must be mention  
of airplanes in childhood

fantastic!

To survive  
an empty stomach  
tomorrow I turn 31

denouement escapes  
moves to close  
how can end

survive this

fast weep  
close the book  
draw a gun

hand in hand  
how bright your dress  
how straight my lies

action hardly matters

after gin you want the

next song or shrug

me

fast asleep





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