

Xu Lizhi (b. 1990, Jieyang, Guangdong) began working after high school. In 2011, he took a job at the Foxconn plant on the assembly line before being transferred to logistics. He left in 2014 to look for work in Jiangsu, but he was unsuccessful and soon returned to Shenzhen. On September 30 of that year, he jumped to his death. His posthumous collection of poetry is called *A New Day*.

I Speak of Blood

I speak of blood, since it can't be avoided
I also want to speak of breezes, flowers, snow, the moon
speak of the past dynasty, poetry in wine
but reality makes me speak only of blood
blood comes from matchbox rented rooms
narrow, cramped, sunless year round
oppressing the working men and women
distant husbands and wives gone astray
guys from Sichuan hawking spicy soup
old people from Henan selling trinkets on blankets
and me, toiling all day just to live
and opening my eyes at night to write poems
I speak to you of these people, I speak of us
ants struggling one by one through the swamp of life
blood walking drop by drop along the worker's road
blood driven off by the city guards or the choke of a machine
scattering insomnia, illness, unemployment, suicide along the way
the words explode one by one
in the Pearl Delta, in the belly of China
dissected by the seppuku blade of order forms
I speak of this to you
though my voice goes hoarse and my tongue cracks
in order to rip open the silence of this era
I speak of blood, and the sky smashes open
I speak of blood, and my whole mouth turns red