





Grass, Kim Su-yong

*A poet who explored
love and freedom
as poetic and political ideals*

Xianlu Yi

Grass

Grass 1968, 5, 29

*The grass is lying flat.
Fluttering in the east wind that brings rain in its train,
the grass lay flat
and at last it wept.
As the day grew cloudier, it wept even more
and lay flat again.*

*The grass is lying flat.
It lies flat more quickly than the wind.
It weeps more quickly than the wind.
It rises more quickly than the wind.*

*The day is cloudy, the grass is lying flat.
It lies low as the ankles
low as the feet.
Though it lies flat later than the wind,
it rises more quickly than the wind
and though it weeps later than the wind,
it laughs more quickly than the wind.
The day is cloudy, the grass's roots are lying flat.*

Kim su-yong 1921-1968

Kim su-yong is one of the most exceptional poets of modern Korea. He died at the relatively young age of 48 in 1968, but his poetry has become a symbol of freedom and revolution during the democratization of Korea, embodying literature that represents social concerns while being an example of modern, avant-garde poetry. The 48 years during which he lived was a period of great turbulence for the Korean people who experienced Japanese colonialism, national independence on August 15, 1945, the division of the Korean peninsula and the Korean War, dictatorships, and the student revolution on April 19, 1961. Consequently, he mainly wrote participatory poetry that emphasized the criticism of reality and the spirit of resistance. In his early poems he employs all the strangeness that Korean versions of Imagism permits, in a highly aestheticizing vein. Later works focus on the most ordinary events of daily life, often pathetic or bathetic, domestic and social. His last poem, "Grass," only published after his death, has provoked particular critical attention and debate. Depending on the viewpoint of the literary figures and their political beliefs, the meaning and the value of Kim's poetry showed a great range of

differing opinions. The populist grass-roots movement interpreted the phrases from "Grass" such as "lying down faster than the wind" and "rising faster than the wind," as signifying the tenacious vitality of the masses. Meanwhile, the humanist interpreted it as a symbol of life itself.

Brother Anthony

A translator, scholar, and an Emeritus Professor of Sogang University (Seoul). He has published forty volumes of translations of Korean literature. In 2015 he was awarded an honorary MBE by Queen Elizabeth for his contributions to Korea-British relations.

Xianlu Yi

A designer who lives in Seoul. He spent his childhood and early youth in China. After he had studied English literature at Tsinghua University, he returned to Seoul and majored in communication design at SADI. Now he is working on hand-crafted book arts, focusing on typographic experimentation in modern literature.



풀 (Pul)
"Grass"
1968. 5. 27

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