



NINE
NIGHTS
IN
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Nine Nights in Cambodia

ប្រាំបួនរាត្រីនៅកម្ពុជា

By Greg Bem

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Written in Phnom Penh



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- For questions regarding these poems, life in Cambodia, or Greg Bem in any capacity, send an email to gregbem@gmail.com
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Introduction

This publication was crafted on a whim. Nine days before the end of the calendar year (2013) and with some free time in between jobs, I was inspired to do a writing project. I started with the calendar constraint of nine days (or nights, really). Nine seemed to be a strong number anyway, at least based on what you can find on websites concerning spiritual symbolism and numerology.

After I decided on nine nights of writing, I decided I would write nine poems each night, just to keep the task challenging. I decided that I would write at 9PM each night too, and although that's technically 21:00, it seemed like a conducive hour to evoke creativity. As if that wasn't enough, each of the nine poems written each night were written with nine lines.

What's the book about? Well, lots of things. Each night had its own major theme, and these are: Travel, Space, Joy, Home, Time, Work, Fear, Family, and Return. And then each individual poem had its own minor theme, which carried over from night to night, and are (in order): Home, Cambodia, Friendship, Object, Me, Experience, Contention, the United States, and Sleep. If you look closely, you'll note that Home is both a major and minor theme, so maybe that tells you something about what I'm really writing about. How each of those ideas actually played out in full, well, that's up for the reader to see (or not).

Some background, too: I have been living in Phnom Penh for around four months, working and studying and traveling and adventuring and everything else you would expect a 27-year-old American to do. It's my first time living abroad. I've been reading a lot of local writers, but also Giono, Hesse, Soseki Natsume, Banana Yoshimoto, but really I have not been reading much poetry here. The most I can claim to have read is a handful of Berrigan's sonnets.

There's something meditative and healthy about Southeast Asia. Especially in the convenience of the 21st Century. My economic and social privileges acknowledged, life here is a glorious, glorious blanket of psychological comfort.

What have I actually been doing here? Aside from some graduate level studies, I have been helping to connect writers in Cambodia together, somewhat successfully, through events and networking and workshops. Most of my life of teaching Poetics has been supported/augmented/sponsored by *Nou Hach*, a literary organization and publication based in Phnom Penh. From writing workshops to readings to writing tours, I have been attempting to encourage writers (of all kinds) to do their writing (in whatever way they seem fit) in as many settings as possible.

What about my own writing? I think by December I had drafted almost one hundred poems of various forms, styles, and lengths, and distinctly different in tone than the poems you will read here. Many of those poems, which could be their own, separate book, saw significant revisions, as well. Anyone who knows me will consider that shocking, as in previous times I have rarely gone back and done any editing. But the poems were (and still are, to this day) loose and unconnected. This publication's foundation and core ideas have been inspired by connectivity, and I think they do an okay job, my one criticism being much of the connection is due to the heavy presence of abstraction. What's particularly curious is that I've written using abstraction over image during a time where I praise the image and practice the objective description of the concrete on a regular basis.

My friend Antoine recently described my current poetry as "baroque," which is a pretty sexy description. I won't deny some of the attention I've been paying to sound (near rhyming occupying a special place in my writing heart at the moment), rhythm (meter), and other sonic qualities. You can thank some of my experiences with the Four Hoarse Men and other sound poetry outlets in Seattle, which were definitely the

last major connections and influences to a beating life of poetry before I moved to Cambodia. You can also thank my undying obsession with hip hop. You can also thank Cambodian poetry, which are traditionally sung and follow absurdly strict forms. The Khmer language, which is a beautiful language with so many mysteries and puzzles, is so brilliantly consonant and euphonious in nature. Poetry and creative word construction is part of everyday life here.

You'll see that the poems in this publication, though perhaps on their surface more noticeable in craft than other poems I've written, are quite conscious of themselves. I don't try to play any games of hide and seek in these poems, though perhaps some of the language is a bit labyrinthine at times, though only for the sake of originality. An attempted originality, of course.

The procedural generation of poems in this doc has been a series of cathartic experiences, too. It's often difficult to isolate the self for long enough to reflect, especially having taken note of the struggle with advertising and my personal information consumption through Reddit, Facebook, Twitter, 4chan, and the rest. In Cambodia and everywhere else in this social media world lifestyle reflection is challenged by distraction. Though I didn't try to do anything fancy or hyperbolic here, it's been a very personal opportunity to commit myself to better understanding the tropical days in a land of poverty, conflict, beauty, liveliness, and history. It will perhaps be the first of several books.

A final note: if you feel like taking any of the text for your own creative reasons, please do so. This the first publication I'm releasing under Creative Commons, and I'm giving a shout-out to the license in hopes that it might actually encourage some word and idea collage in the future, since it's something we human poets still have before the days of the absolute poetic robot algorithm are upon us.

- Greg, 27 Dec 2013

1: TRAVEL

១: ធ្វើដំណើរ

One: Home 卍°

Tracing road lines like fingers
trace the heritage, arcs of road
entire city electric neon grid
to where your place fits and is
it's forbidden guiding me
who forebode it foretold it as hidden
that of the rightful owner that he
would own the rights too
insidious mucus built it too
the breeze of black in my lungs

Two: Cambodia កម្ពុជា

Choose map lest you lose your mind
the strap across your chest made of dust
not diamond and glass and plastic mass
and yet no rust not now as such in this season
earned in and locked into being a pin set in
palm leaves fanning fetched and folded
engines running exhaust poison of loss
of getting the point rubbed in the faucet
of your face the gloss glassy above defacement

Three: Friendship មិត្តភាព

And we go together the weather shredding
as though we were sledding tho' here only texting
sunlight no snow and mutually benevolent screeching
benefactors crumbling and the teachers teaching
the noise of the diesel engines stealing me
sigh spree of joys make me more morbid feeling
crusty and synchronized trustily mustering
before a moan the alloys of the bicycle must bring
bleed through rain to match the color of your pain

Four: Object ၂၆၇

Gave me a godly secret captured in a treasure box
cube grinning its depth as deep as a grin
the window open my hands penetrating slip in
tough luck in a musty chamber the cool air marks sterile
the space going by bombastic rays of sensation games
they're all cubes known to ruse to do to strew across
it was as given tossed through a silent room
and alarms go off daily the conundrum cold calling
its sickening digest spying to be reported and recorded

Five: Me ୨୨

Health and wellness health and selfness

shellfish crawling from left to rigid to right

the long stare goodnight keeping it energized

and in sight for we look upon the ones we love

for we look upon the ones we love and notice

we notice their kingdoms in our palms scars

they run deep as fissures across landscapes barring

the liver late in leaving us laughing made of purple pus

a cascade and from the tip of my head lustered enough

Six: Experience បទពិសោធន៍

M and M and M and M the crown of chocolate
looming completes me moi more fire muoy bee bei
crew is loopy the chances of us getting out with love
lower than the last time the light loomed lax and we
we lumber the movement of our teeth tumbling
you are passing the way from wake to wash and warm
the people they have frozen so you could stow a flame
while the sand twists lame and turns its way then disappears
blurring this world becoming a humming gently
an end appended and upended in the walk home

Seven: Contention ការជំទាស់

When you can't move you will blob then you will cramp
your hands to blog will hurt so too your thighs the flight
of the gibbons of the enumerable glued to your mind
accepting the memory of exception of your hands
once gnarled and withered how many glass corners did you touch
manning the keys of registers beneath filmy glass landscapes of heat
and twitch and understanding your heart warms by moving
and the candles within are melting rather than burning
along the track from seeing to believing in might and fire

Eight: United States សហរដ្ឋអាមេរិក

Unlike where the roads are forever in their width
subtle balance beam of the bimbo boring deep toward
what I mean the majestic magic of a filter of feathery funnels
under the tunnel support the back the brace breathtaking
dunce still leaving watchdogs at the edge rocking to sleep
screensavers running dry the time has come to go deep
to trip up and remember we the forests and snow and lower
the images sunk lowered by lovers through anchor spirit
a spit of sight brings us into the startle of known facts

Nine: Sleep កើត

Its wishes will you to wend with it to fit to
wrap through though you're never so alone
so reach it and touch the whimper before bed
the laughter of sheets twisting and schizoid turns
single stasis wakening late to mend before burning
these are the hateful glamor gloves clutching nothing
though you recognize the protectorate clutch bending
much too much the infiltrator being dumb and drowning
pool of blood is oil is pile of bricks crown for king

2: SPACE

២: ទីតាំង

One: Home ୨:

Space is where you put your finger down
to where the last drop sits the crumbs
mixed with keys the keys black in a sea of gray
my laptop being chosen for utility not looks
the aesthetic not in this line or found in another
the quake quacking in the distance is guttural
this is after all about laughter and communion
reunification and reunion bringing lunar fumes
bolded and staggered no more memory to contain

Two: Cambodia កម្ពុជា

You will notice and nullify your own life through windows
made of glass like everywhere else at last you start to notice
through the tourniquets of dust and the smelt of smog
lone oxen bathing in oxygen and alive with livelihood
a signal of disruption and at least at last decay
the straying light coming in from the streetlamps
or a television screen catching the minimal waves
while those you know and those you are with cough
estimating certainties lounging with carts and bamboo

Three: Friendship មិត្តភាព

We drag together like magnets or as vermin to food
though I prefer the metal and I'm sure you the breathing beasts
and your heart has the blood pumping solemnly to lungs
silence exists back and forth as seesaw or pendulum
tasking us with light and your body is your own temple
no one calling others names or reading descriptions of wisdom
the relief wheeling 'round or when unraveled we're found
loud music playing in some distant background right here
waves of hair shaken and spread to surfaces you contact

Four: Object ၎ီ

A single estranged tree adorably poured over with lights
southern section its home your life is where you roam
where you board to become a person in an ecstatic room
while clocks creep and click your shoes showing us
while the sky sits waiting for concrete to cast its breathing
fake naturalism brooding over desire for enhancement
possibly the enchantment you wished for you left
wicked you taught us all to be possible and plausible
while no one passes us saying wake up pay attention

Five: Me 

Stretch fingers up to ceiling the birth of their direction given
and stretch my legs but not enough to cause the blood to spasm
the eyes in my skull grasp the concept but leave you alive
hair sputtering as though a fountain or sprig to be plucked
and ears hearing your critique bounce open then vibrate to shut
leaving the layers of skin and muscles and tendon working
the conditions of contract as ever present as any others
meanwhile the brain dreams of decay and exportation
and the heart begins to beat thickly once more nothing new

Six: Experience បទពិសោធន៍

Whether it be or be not the jungle looms rudely
as a scrying stone or screaming bone in your graveyard
let the heat sink in and let Chambok's steady water fall
before hardly thinking to skip the beat that would drown
and keep you from further living and further proof
your friends all surrounding you like shadows in shade
and light living for light's sake moving you laid out
like the course of action to teach and to aesthetically train
your own eyes sold to be sealed shut or kept simply as weight

Seven: Contention ការជំទាស់

The streets filled with their harbingers of startled stutter
motors plunging smoke into nasal passageways made gray
and graying and dying and the fumes are actively killing
as we sit in this pout of traffic the letters melting into lines
or dots and dotted across the forehead are attacks of sweat
they lack the blood I've been caused to collect with effort
they lack the structure and the decency of positive pressure
due to simulacra and spectacle sprained into expression
due to the monument of the moon that keeps streets clear

Eight: United States សហរដ្ឋអាមេរិក

Patterns and jigsaws and memories of the strangest corners
where stranger things have happened and coroners are passions
though with death we have the crazy and with crazy the sad
all to be feared when it's early enough and clever and attached
your understanding being as full and static as the madness
we've come to agree can entrap us become factor again
while the distance of the plane or boat is beaming slightly
a map sitting illuminated computerized in the front of me
nothing better than what has been founded through infinity

Nine: Sleep គេង

You occupy singular and focal though perhaps sightless
you and you and you sitting alongside each and every other
each other blossoming through silence and formlessness
you know not what you have done or what you intend
the clamor just a cause or stammer to be yellow and amended
with covered blankets and sheets beneath bodily cushions
the pillows arch your head and you keep clean and low feet
while cool air and sharing goes far along the way we can be
melancholy dreams featuring cautious and endless breeding

3: JOY

៣: សេចក្តីអំណរ

One: Home ୨:

The way the lights waver as they stand still breathing
the way breaths breathe the way the air filters out space
and time becomes a crumpled ball or a fan blade catching
you and your light the shadows eclipsed and relapsing
before the yawn and the worth of the crutch comes up
a giant window or door cracked open creaking clean
holding you up and positioned in soft wood polished
metal trim and the tile floors poured over with feet
feeling frozen into place by a love for and by reflection

Two: Cambodia កម្ពុជា

The taste of the dust immense so commence with closing
for when the mouth moves slowly through language I'm bent
or perhaps dosing off in the muscles of sleep valid reaping tense
the earth and the love to lounge and lunge for out there it is sweet
sweet music and the challenge of land and people growing
as the music grows thin and whispers begin to infiltrate
and perhaps we can say begin before the packaging unravels
mourning movements and skin cling out over and in travels
monuments erected using the dust and the song and sin

Three: Friendship មិត្តភាព

Never better seen than the reflection of yourself through another
and the other owning self through you by way of mutual movement
and its understanding so come and welcome and be as to be one
finale of formation standing through processed finding and discovery
the undying love from one set of eyes to that priceless gaze of another
the ice and flame and the stutter of being under the covers the blister
for though it may sting to touch cheek to cheek flesh peeling listlessly
the mood it is soon solid and reeling as fist to fist boldly hammers
until the checkered vibrations come to be watched and condoned

Four: Object វត្ថុ

What do you call love in a place where you don't want to buy
where the nature of the beauty is in the purchase pronounced
and held to your chest though perhaps acquisition is secret
or foreign a loss or a win or a loving testament through money
though I have given up my desire to extend feelers and bills
and sign on the most dotted of lines with such wind making chime
while water waves cascade away the secretion of exchange
create a range of emotion attached to profound endearment
though I see no specific object and with grace I carry nothing

Five: Me 

One must continue to go on to love one's self and the application
that the sun has become arrested hidden behind the planet
leaving the flickers of the unknown ready to pop up and bother
and so my own light be stripped and displayed for at least one minute
and perhaps that is not enough and so we must wait and then see
the coos and clawing sounds of pounding screeches fatalistic
freed of the dead and those staring at their microcosmic screens
made to awaken by only one distracting instant in the heat
so let us eat and let me cook bringing a smile to your nodding head

Six: Experience បទពិសោធន៍

For I like the lasting impression that has lasted itself to finality
and for I like the expressions you have dawned upon your face
and the flicker of your fingers and the twitch of your neck
slight courage of hair draped over your face and the smile
the smile sliding down tubular to a jumble of honest endeavors
the tumble of beggarly testaments as the body moves closer
moans itself into squeals of laughter and the shiver trivial
proving a movement may be a moment too soon looming aloof
only to let grow what's become before awake it is gone

Seven: Contention ការជំទាស់

A contraption to define happiness in the arms of statelessness
unless one state is good enough for us to be gruff about
and pout we cower and move along like lovers though it's enough
cufflinks or pant creases and shoveling too many ideas at once
mind slowed as though poking along a winding path of trash
or the long road submerged the water brown and loudly sloshing
its components cornered and crushed like blunt blushing
yet despite the noise of the rubric and the failing understanding
the flailing perhaps defines these struts in the best poise

Eight: United States សហរដ្ឋអាមេរិក

Partly cloudy and scattered with sunshine and ice storms and snowfall
and the blood of many and the solutions bringing death to systems
and the lone gunmen and the gangs of warriors after the hours
a clock having stopped its ticking and the motion designed for brooding
so soon we entertain what was once what we were forced to blame
ugly headlights and framed corners or rolling hills turned to cheap thrills
or broiling or bowling or the gentle toil of psychotic friends in peripheries
while the booze blazes and the bold law enforcement trace phases
my own mind having had to find flight before finding glitter in the dirt

Nine: Sleep គេង

Oh sweet sooth and the tame sayings of the prayers of being zoned
and the light at the end of each tunnel is a muffle or chant or groan
and the counting of sheep or cheap office chairs or little pink pills
lingers like broken stares we've found to be kinder and rarer
instilled to be swallowed while we lovers groom golden winks
and the pillow is the oyster and the blanket is the soft caress
belated to be your built comfort entertaining engaged stress
so wish with us as we fall in love to be prostrate and fated
before succumbing to the touch of dreams and more love

4: HOME

៤: ផ្ទះ

One: Home ୨:

Grounded before being blown by the wind
your space spacious and filled with fruitions
refuge given names nominally through form
border attaching itself through walls and doors
winding in circles spinning on the balls of feet
an identity a cyclone of blood and machinery
applications of defiance within appliances
allows for a castle growing before eroding
sewn into street without form of earth or air

Two: Cambodia កម្ពុជា

You as seedling gasping for air within the esoteric
landscape as warm as it is hugging there surrounding
and the bells ring within your head and then honks
and then you see your brethren selling torn stems
fruit interlocked and lounging behind plastic glass
love overcoming as potholes overtake the wheels
and ancient temples surpassed by an army of selfies
the shoulders astute and scrounging for space
a dimple in a portrait like the defacement of a pagoda

Three: Friendship មិត្តភាព

The notion of familiarity within the golden abode
with rows of glances and exchanged words like roads
the slick strictness flexed to become lax and erect
by the challenge and the fantastical elastic tension
for these are the holes we hide in conducting whispers
when not straying from profile to profile in the ether
nether possibilities being the fine draw of the digital
where there's ownership or where we've drawn the line
neither a line dizzying or inferno with millions of anti-pixels

Four: Object ၄၆

Will to coffee the ground beans of speed and power sit
as we sit as humans our own fat a soft cushion to inhabit
the caffeine swirling brown and astute of such high aesthetic
the duration to wait being a weight of kinesthetic creation
calcified into a creeping crucifixion in the corner of our long days
and the sun collapses shooting rays into soulful veins always
stray vacuums of light pocketed and portably pleasant
presently letting me sit back biting previously bitten lips
the bloodless cup slowly sipped the rich blasts of bliss

Five: Me §
1

One must be centralized to compromise life within and without
the same chin that once held the drool now cool yawning out loud
as loudly and proudly as desirable and the finest bit of ego seeping
for we hold the keys peeping through the hole near the rusty lock
hoping to catch the self in the act on the other side racking docked rises
personality becoming a funny stub or loveliness or a similar sensation
some thing or state sent to enliven or cause bright and red elation
eyes gleaming in the smoke dreaming in coughs of relations ending
solitude the tent above the heart that through all beating vibrates

Six: Experience បទពិសោធន៍

You may move or you may sit and you may ascribe signs and symbols
and those people who arrive will allow you to reflect on your life
while noises beyond walls and through the portals of screens
transform like golems as mud to monster abstract to recognizable
or perhaps the consideration sits openly like domination or distraction
a zeal colored orange and looking biotic or processed in nature
though we do not let in such oozing through the vents in this pod
we sleeping giants able to smell the allotment of negative arguments
and every single visitor understanding their own nod to comfort

Seven: Contention ការជំទាស់

The silence is impenetrable as armor is impenetrable
and there is a screensaver of arrows reaching their goals
the gyroscope or dynamic element in your device pulsating
your movement being the crux to the argument of transit
every element within your life at risk of becoming stammer
or at least a degree of noise to hold back waves of terror
as the rooms get smaller and the smallest smells ever grosser
even though the mind is slow to adjust into interpretation
for all the monsters of the elsewhere and of the other stay fussy

Eight: United States សហរដ្ឋអាមេរិក

I've never felt the cold winds from the north comfort me
as I do now that I am locked in a sea of tropical tribulation
dreaming perhaps of the carousing interest or intent of mountains
and their bitter verse voluminous and ancient and biting
the memory of walking in midnight's blighted black silence
crunching snow and glistening dead grass everlasting as death is
many fields empty and inviting their dream subtly longing
my back agonized to understand and deal with distance
though I know the snow's slowness of going is visible

Nine: Sleep គេង

You need a place to sleep and you need a pace to see sleep through
and the loudest it gets is what's known to you your bed comforting
and the windows have been shrouded made impassable by blinds
so call the room a cocoon call it privatized protected with the password
or find the mere way to understand life isn't absurd or adjourned
but hibernating a nest with radiating heat and smallest peeps
finally emitted from the slits in the walls and the dreaming doors
the wood and painted surfaces saying hello as we string along in sleep
prosperous and fumbling with secret and grimy binding hands

5: TIME

៥: ពេលវេលា

One: Home ୨:

Time it does pass it does sit still or move flashing and wavy
as do the lines on the screen that we called once or twice
or never while dancers hold sparkling cups above our heads
and the twisted sink of liquid rings in our drowning ears
the show going along unmanned beyond and above or out
with each separation another trip you have waited to taste
your nerves sensitive and muscles spasming and skin shivering
along with the light once though homely now unknown
forsaken the future readily picked apart as though ancient

Two: Cambodia កម្ពុជា

Scratch my head and hail for a moto dup duping me deeply
the secret screen of my ego a caress from some seemly spree
of space of individual melting to days and the latest truths try
to be less of a hindrance when there is merely an oval echo
the room becoming sooner swoony than a reflective moon
under which we must slither and moan or howl technically
while instead I sit watching calendars burning their pages urged
and learning the changes I end up scratched my reading glasses
strange and purchased from another age another year another price

Three: Friendship មិត្តភាព

Over time we ask ourselves through the tasking of lasting
new questions related still and always to pilfering of age's offerings
cut sideways or from front to back as attack as stunt as knack
a mellow trick of vision through a musty and dusted window
so much hinges upon voices carried and barely yellow or muffled
to a rehearsed reversal cursing what we hold behind shoulders
our figures gleaming fattened or our skinny bones glowing
or galvanized or cordoned into choppy artistic renderings
as yet the lips take us and our smiles alleviate fresh tendencies

Four: Object ၎ီ

I suppose you can call the collective singular and rogue
as each moment washes the way of a wormhole's sick vogue
the ant horde raging across skin and every other terse surface
as I brace to sip and grimace witnessing their latent barrage
the courage sweltering up in me as I camouflaged am weak
each moment becoming undone through what subtleties I lack
the churning of emotions foaming fourth and dimensional
a curved token of appreciation and dead loaning of droning
until parenthetical parallel lives lead us to nothing observed

Five: Me ୧

How can I judge life than by making a call to the miracles
like my mess of beard and the sheer spiteful sprouts on my face
and length of head's hair turning a hip cut to a deeply regressed image
while millions of cells emerge my skin as weak as is failing
as the ruinous scampering of my neighbors alert me to pay attention
and I am laced through walls of this hour in this cavernous apartment
my own obstinate freedom formed by ideas born each minute
the dust swirling in grounded patterns near the stable red door
and my feet are still and still dirty beneath an old rattan table

Six: Experience បទពិសោធន៍

Your magenta messages flutter up and monitor my over and under doings
says my makeshift surveillance turning private inquiry to normalcy
you having taken time through schedules and segments to understand
the concomitance of communication quivering through command
where things have slowed through silence and exhaustive journeys
where people enter as quickly as they forget and then fade
and then disappear as those who adventure and learn tend to do
and our watchful keeper keeps track of us for us to study us
and as such we must be grateful for its alignment above ownership

Seven: Contention ការជំទាស់

I suppose we all feel the wind on our backs and our knees
as we're racing across those roads we have never seen or tried
the potholes bigger and the risks horrifying dimpling our cheeks
but to find exception of comfort is the impossible rumination
and its resulting ruination resembles wild hair and dirty clothes
and trembles or tremors founded upon great swaths of fallow fields
or galleries of doors rallying in their cooperative casket of creaking
the sickness plaguing us and fetching trust in how little we know
below grim countenance below blowing prospective pitches

Eight: United States សហរដ្ឋអាមេរិក

Is it a sea you see warping over the ruddy back of the digital globe
the waves only instantaneous as your mind's eye strokes them
and casts them aside as an anchor or Angkorean Temple Complex
graffiti wet or dry rubbed into the sides of sandstone so easily
for it is the war of travel that begs the mutual destructive lens
the psychosis of the otherness reaching out pissing while standing
fend we do ogrish mutilating selves around that empire's big bend
mortuary propped to corner next to blueprints of a morgue
while the ocean's texture and symbolism are thinly veiled and flowing

Nine: Sleep គេង

How much passes when your eyes shut and all space goes out
and the world becomes what else and you struggle to form questions
as life is helpless as a ghost's life is undying unspooled unspoken
and transparent as far as we're made aware or tricked into it
the life inside as pertinent to that which is outside the wishes
and the wells of our ranges or stages pace nicely and shyly too
though I'm begging you to loosen and join this abyss misty-eyed
as only in forgetting the chatter together moves us to be alive
only in forgetting does the latter move us to try to talk together

6: WORK

៦: កិច្ចការ

One: Home ୨:

Such a struggle to get a rise from the head in this the latest
earliest time being what is next and optimal as I like light
and I like the churn of the machines on the roads between us
from first point to next and all other urban capacities
my own body made more to machine mourning sensitivity
my solo self growing appendages and duplicating nodes
for each idea to magically appear like a coin behind the ear
the thought of love slowly transcending the tasks of hands
and what becomes the hibernation cave now a magician's cape

Two: Cambodia កម្ពុជា

I had been waiting years for the opportunity to slump
and no one told me Cambodia's pedals would be such
to keep you conducive to enjoying your life and purpose
if only to collect your sympathy and sin and soldiering
and so perhaps bringing out the damned is not so bad
gears slowly spinning to keep momentum not so bad
and despite terrible air you are lightly flying on two feet
the ground dusty or drowning behind your floored form
sense and sensation of accomplishment a test of rest

Three: Friendship មិត្តភាព

Aside from the psychosis of the trillionth text message
its tremors bending into a timbre of fantastic expectation
your form in the office beckons then snags and drags me
and ostensibly there is more to work than effortless dredges
and the less we know of the working world and its sooty abyss
means the more we can know of our own abyssal stances
deadlines forming those moments to which we cling or repel
as you and I and the diamond eye of the ceiling's neon lights
sing songs of corrupted faculties and our own brief authority

Four: Object ၎ီ

What function do you serve me and the endless tides of traps
the tasks as light not lovely but as a bucket full of ruffled knives
their sound carrying my ears through a bloody and dreary tide
the tide a foul testament of the duties to be performed
adventures you would rather losslessly toss with one key
but we cannot and we must not wails the lighthouse keeper
the glow in his eyes keeping us floating across the water
yet little does he know my lifeless lump he suggests alive
only loiters as a corpse whose instruments fitted a final feat

Five: Me 

What is your personal etymology and what gifts does it bring you
experiences apparently severing and serving mixtures of joy
though I can never tell through the thin creamed-white wallpaper
and the stains of dirt I've very skillfully sundered from my body
while there is not even an echo of the blue thunder that was
and while we wait for modernist machinations to sway us
induct us into the pool of the ruling boisterous scintillations
erupt us into fools cascading broken methods and old ring tones
the entire time my own cheeks hanging like deflated balloons

Six: Experience បទពិសោធន៍

Having nine lives cast to nine shadows teaches you to do better
keeps you from musing too hard about your profits in either direction
the past being a null and void and oily pool of nether voices
the future a factory of nameless faces and missed opportunities
grants given by talons and tendrils and your own tendons tighten
above skin blotchy and shot across muscle and there are wrinkles
the bones below rickety and wretched and worn endless and gray
a long series unwinding forwards and backwards reminding you
the table of time unwinds on its own and to stop brings a flop

Seven: Contention ការជំទាស់

You will ruin your patterns and sleep will be made askew
and the potions of death will be dripped down your throat
your drunken understanding writing note upon frayed note
a breath of fresh air and your lungs have shriveled on up
and the only salvation is unwrapping one more decaying layer
while figures linger in corners assessing your torn fingers
your breath testing its rot and stinking like a forgotten idea
entire core slightly vibrating though neither today nor tomorrow
and yesterday a blazing imprint upon the buzzing blood

Eight: United States សហរដ្ឋអាមេរិក

There is a single slow motion packet of paper to be filed
and a line made of dots drops in across your dusty desk
the pens being made from an exotic country and culture
and the lights never going out unless you tell them to
hours of every day being nearly and necessarily the same
though there are roads to keep you steady and lively
enough money to keep you from foraging without ceasing
ceasing to breathe in new rooms hold open new doors
no reason to collapse the foundation of your own story

Nine: Sleep គេង

Daylight a privilege for those who must sink into their holes
training quivering tints in aquamarine the quandaries in video
the screen exploding with language and chances for change
though everything slims every day it's been set to be regular
the fans humming their tune to get you to beg for more sleep
reap the turning of wheels and the peeling of the fresh fruit
before the angry ghosts carry you up from their whirling world
place you at the peak you've come to learn to care for
intervals like interviews adjusting and benefitted by bloating

7: FEAR

៧: សេចក្តីភ័យខ្លាច

One: Home ୨:

Having dabbled in the cross cut corners painted with sound
dogs growling around the edges and the scamper of the lizards
and the lights turned off to inspire a rustling of fellow footsteps
while innocent shadows turn into jagged teeth and demons
leniency learning to lower itself to stubbly stretches of dreams
one more block of the innocent melted down sent careening
my mind opened up like the furrow or quake venting hot air
ruptured and rifted adventures advantageous to scare tactics
as we lower ourselves too into new roles in darkened rooms

Two: Cambodia កម្ពុជា

Oh dreaming far scrapes of an earth shut out and sold to bids
the war of a landscape prized with the horror of planted mines
the fear of the ghosts amalgamated into a giant ghoulish mouth
ready to swallow you whole while you wallow in the victim's role
saying Oh Really before dropping your purplish tourist curiosity
and running through a rice paddy trail to the nearest village
the poorest people peering into your eyes weary of your trespass
smoke covering the perimeters of your vision with little worry
and so many automobile fatalities occurring unpublicized daily

Three: Friendship មិត្តភាព

Start in the gut and work your way up if you've found the toughness
the prick in your stomach like the squeezing pick of fingers to pimples
dry skin diseased and in patches flaking within and then without
with more messages to scream about coming from the downfall
the waterfall a now distant memory in a bank of many all failed
and the attempt to call forth instances of you freeze or are inconsistent
the instant you know the data has been corrupted has been discarded
there being a need to revisit them again and again while couched
the heaviness of your mouth ringing like a phone or stranger a printer

Four: Object ၎ီ

Hold it in your hands and watch it disappear behind your closed lids
as shutting the lid on the world is the best way to forget existences
your eyes heavier now and they fall twice as easy than the push open
your hands older now less sensitive though internal pain sees gain
aching joints and bruised knuckles and blood vessels exploding across
once peach now gray and pink more claw than human paw more animal
and we think of where animals go when they turn to rest and to die
how humans once their lives are untied pale in their comparisons
before it all slips from the grasps of others and softly disappears

Five: Me 

The personal fear is the personal moment you choose to crack the door
and let the light stream in from the spaces it knew so well before you
and let the windows crack open so the breeze and elements enter
the clothes slightly hooked to their hangers swaying with each push
while you stand in a corner tapping on the wall and reviewing a map
thinking of the spaces you have not yet attached to your imminent lifeline
dreaming the dampness does not spread to cover you and slowly suffocate
even with the lights turned on and the heart beating the blood around
even as the sky loses objects traveling through it like units of observation

Six: Experience បទពិសោធន៍

The sketchy pond had been stormed with smoke and a crowd of gloom
blackened scorch marks revealing a fish made of metal and mourning
and what was not water was a simple farmland ditch next to the road
and what was not a fish was a bus previously carrying many bodies
and as we passed by in our own high-speed metallic sarcophagus
the sterile air frozen and keeping me from sleeping and feeling weak
anger and screeching fear entered through my temples and expanded
from the tips of my fingers to the individual hairs on my feet energy
it was an energy made of blackened haze keeping us fused to confusion

Seven: Contention ការជំទាស់

It is not that living a healthy and strong and sound life is bad
but the not being able to take risks and encounter repercussions
even if they are engaged through the mind and the mind alone
is considerably unjust and gleaming of divisive uncertainties
in land time gave more time to sort things into clearer matters
as we are all autonomous beings participating in discourse bliss
while mellow smells of flowers enter our nose and leave our lips
the colors of our lungs beautifying through these degrees of perfection
yet lasting effects to bloom from those enclosed petals is unknown

Eight: United States សហរដ្ឋអាមេរិក

Of course the vast presence is the blimp to carry me to the dark waters
and gut me from the tips of trolling mountains their eyes goring me daily
and of course I want to go back because the lack of knowing is incredible
with there being no understanding awaiting me from some doorstep
with there being storms understanding their duty to truly ruin me
so the presence in short is not short and not blimpish in nature
instead the trajectory jests with us and keeps our gazes growing
while we count our fingers and watch the trickle of blood from edges
form pools with strange phrases written by some twisted instrument

Nine: Sleep គេង

Shall we go to sleep my friend I say and it's not a question
rather a suggestion as all other options have been exhausted
the spent energy one as well a long time gone into the sky
while horizons are wily in nature and our nature is hard-wired
so we shall go to sleep and allow the wiring to slickly constrict
before beaming telecommunication networks are fully erect
before we're streaming like individual egoist videos on channels
screened from door to door and everyone knows your area
cultish symptoms a knowledge of supremacy and transparency

8: FAMILY

៨: គ្រួសារ

One: Home ୨୦

I wonder about the lips and the fingers and the beautiful resonant laughter
and the whispers in the darkness and the secrets between the walls
purpose driven construction and the sake of utility amongst dead and living
the living and the dead and the fortunate and the damned and confessions
corners filled with dust and footprints leading to the cavities of shame
cornered belongings and fulfillments left undergone or underworked
chances clinging on like cobwebs to the beams sitting beneath the ceiling
catching dreams and nightmares and the congruent community calling
but mostly I wonder of the stars through the skylight and toys illuminated

Two: Cambodia កម្ពុជា

Angled from opposing sides of the road the lives struggling and pacific
pitched to stare and so do my eyes as I wonder about their own slights
along the plight of the road a street dirtied by passing moto tires groping
every individual hoping to carry on their back that which they claim to know
that worth the flow of a rhythmic cascade both belated and awaited
and endured too the channels of cycles rumbling as the stones as struggle
as passing sequences of time give meaning through age and subsequent lives
positioned along the interior of map outlined thriving on corners and pockets
shocked and shorn by the smattering of fabric made frantic in wars of wind

Three: Friendship មិត្តភាព

At what one juncture does your breath turn from kindness to love
and the unity of stretched ideas cover up the past casual causality
and your breath is breathing new unity before a direction of silence
the highlands from the heel racing and reaching the throw of thigh
or more vibrantly a silence masked in action thorny and thrashing
cold and warm beams bright along and in the seam of avenues
shining stripes and gleams simultaneously prying storms of streams
wherever you are where I am goes the claim the settling inward
and at such a point sits a peak before your peaking to a new life

Four: Object ၎

Hold onto that symbol constructible sitting a construct of craft
sitting perfectly across your chest or upon the bridge of your lap
the symbol you may wish to name or allow itself time to define
same but more at once by a group come to settle in and watch
watch together a touch from mind to present monument clutched
to flux while we wait for imperfect positioning of perfected response
hold onto that symbol that dutiful bauble dangling from chain
strategizing and plain construction though weighted by response
for only it will provide the definition when all else pops and topples

Five: Me §
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Me I am no family man grinning and grimacing through a lifetime of love
no man groaning in the watchful mind of the guise of new growth and life
at least not yet as the undertaken activities are an undertow of wealth
knowledge of the self part superseding and yes perhaps a bit part selfish
this life made of personal riches and squandering of muses and writhing
and though at times the present permanent absence of family feels wrathful
the pertinence of impermanence is what provides beauty and outlook
and though I care little to be hopeful and perhaps it is sunlit entertainment
keeping open arms extended exercises a tourniquet exotic further futures

Six: Experience បទពិសោធន៍

Position yourself behind a poem in all its prickliness
a screen a canvas of words of broad strokes and ideas
some being toked and others hit lightly across the head
and some being missed like finger to cheek though bloodied
by forlorn and forgotten and sexy personal histories
left open to take what mastery you have over burning slashes
and those kisses more experiential as moments and stories
the endurance leaving you feeling jointly full and empty
and arrested or sultry through every familial festivity

Seven: Contention ការជំទាស់

So many years like a chain gang of ghosts grabbing onto chains
ethereal though there is a certain surreal opacity in their charity
their presence counting up the days of the calendar though down
we are shown these gowns we've worn and had torn by forests
running screaming away from those people providing for us
running crying along paths made of pine needles made porous
the ghosts slathering images and lathering layered chains changing
leaving us to lean against trees trying to understand complexities
singing out our own personal damning before riverbank sand

Eight: United States សហរដ្ឋអាមេរិក

Eight is the night of the United States and its own ideas of family
the life as structured as it is locked and I suppose Cambodia's locked
though with people here there's density expanding as webs do
and though density may be expansive through creation or hollowing
I follow strange learnings and seek to see where difference exists
limitless I ponder and musing is makeshift startling and sudden
the galloping of breaths fetching connections and scorching sounds
memories better left to be forgotten through the changing of shrouds
compact homes with angry open spaces and begging to be bigger as best

Nine: Sleep គេង

When you are young there is the question of sleep
and there is the question of who will put you to sleep
and who will read you to sleep and who will watch
to make sure you fall asleep safely, soundly, roundly
and when you sleep what do you do if you have no one
and is there no one to make sure you can find the rest
to wrap you in warmth and provide you with necessity
sensationally speaking low tones or the flowing of lullabies
the lull in life when you are alone calls for this reflection

9: RETURN

៩: ការត្រលប់ទៅវិញ

One: Home ୨:

You called and you said you missed my grizzly face
and before you said it I had already guessed it
as in the case of my own daily pace affording me time
and with time comes reflection and we are flooded
the ideas of conception being so crucial and uncovered
bound by blood done in anywhere whatsoever with kin
the path leading us as astray as it does today within
to the sound advice of a soundless calming in a room
we know as home central and attractive and current

Two: Cambodia កម្ពុជា

Although I have just begun to have my song sung on these streets
I feel the urge to return and surge forth through the beats I'm still in
chance being thrown upon with the wind or the grit or the lack of sin
being churned to new glances and new earnings for the late-rising bird
my wings torn too and worn through the feathers cascading away
my beak sucking down noodles and the sound of my full self is empty
being challenged by the gentry and the insidious wisps of gallantry
around every corner where every being conducts their travels and horrors
and are fully redeemed by the heat and tan skin and chewed nails cracked

Three: Friendship មិត្តភាព

Return to the basking of thee light and a leeway
oh friends if I may I do say it has been a long time
the game plays and it plays in the same shine
and through neither rhyme nor reason this season
has the going of being easy and offering us grime
stressless ceiling white floral pattern making me queasy
making me freezing in this tropical series of tropics
the mocking of the heat bringing me closer to your seat
your voice and your face adored and adorning fate

Four: Object ၎

What will you take and what will you take back
and how do you manage to slacken your load
with so many stories untold requiring resources
the bold mode of transit being horse-like and conscious
the plight of weight being an understatement
understanding being sane and trusting with elation
waiting to see how you carry ownership daily
from dawn to dusk being the covers of a dusty book
and there are people with torches on every corner

Five: Me ୧

At times it does feel cyclical and like a cycle
there are the stares coming from the blurred villagers
bags of rice and blurred visions of a village population
spinning before donning and through the don a risk
and I shake the fists of contribution and attribution
huge stake claiming like a finger tracing on a map
where you are being far from any flung lifestyle
approachable bursting forth foraging forward ownable
owing to what sense of history in which we all find value

Six: Experience បទពិសោធន៍

Let the torrents flood and the gates remain open or closed
we will return to the moonlit alleyways we have bonded with
the churning of the gutters full of flutterless trash staying
abyssal forms like my own catching sight and moving along
until someone stops to cause a catch in the prolonged image
bringing life into the stillness of death or any other moment
our personalities perpendicular to the passage poised passing
though in these words the help to document and create a rubric
where glimpses of movement of synchronicity loved still hover

Seven: Contention ការជំទាស់

I do not know where I will go or what I will say
and many people will ask me to spend a moment or day
time passing by in the future as it does in the present
the conflict and argument will be the greatest benefit
as I will say yes or I will say no and wonder in equality
the perspective of discourse being one of certainty
the perspective of knowledge and truth and beauty
will rain down upon me as it will to those I know
my mind throwing ashes and dust and some will see

Eight: United States សហរដ្ឋអាមេរិក

You might consider yourself by the way you originate
the snowy mornings and late winter skies emblazoned
a pink sun hiding behind a cap of sky as white as snow
and little do you know the churning of the mind
until you have set foot on the paths through the woods
and the lasting impression of the moods a new session
new dawn with new faces even if they are old and same
old song with old traces even if they are forever changing
space where you still feel warmth later in the distance

Nine: Sleep គេង

There is no time to stretch out and sleep
unless you count that secret love of your life
the eyes tearing up and the flow unbreakable
taking a moment to undo your own aches
stretching out and nodding off extensively
limbs brushing up against comfort and security
the superiority of your love more than a nod
while construction workers sleep in their tents
their boots drying after an intense discussion

END