

## Certification

This is how you Certify  
Death.

Both hearts have to be still and quiet.  
The chest, no longer rising like a wave  
The eyes, open and  
Frozen –  
No one looks away from the sky when they die.

You must note the Time  
Down to the minute  
Though life may have no patience for such  
Exactness.

In death  
A new colour blossoms on the cheek  
As hatred and wonder fade  
To yellow  
In anticipation of flame or soil.

Around the dead  
We tiptoe like brides  
We search for coins and flowers.

We remember those  
Who might soon need  
This confirmation of passing – this Certification  
Forms rustle  
There is so much paperwork to be done  
Even if dying is easy and  
Cold like  
Bone.

Wong Chen Seong

## Waiting for Amputations

We seldom see relatives  
With worried eyes; usually they're closed in sleep  
Or squeezed, moist. No room for half-measures  
With all the nurses filling up  
These caverns.

I realised  
There are no ghosts  
In the antiseptic corridors.  
Just the wailing  
Of the old ones,  
Thirst and rebirth.

I wondered that you could hold yourself still  
Appearing asleep as you were poked, like a half-done bun  
Seeing if you rose  
Flickering, fading in  
This lullaby of gangrene  
Green, yellow, red like roses, blacker than lies.

You were unwrapped gingerly as  
Potpourri;  
Potpourri and pus  
The whole room expanded  
With your gasping:

For water.