

Immortality

Scribbling in the margins of lament,
in the dead sea canto, sure
Lotze is in his muddy rowboat
stringing the blonde mandolin— the companion
snail lecturing him about color wheels
of sizzling garlic and the universal
flat heat death, not
of oblivion. Oblivion
being, almost always, a cyclical neurotic
fixation down here in the reeds
with the greenish pike and winter eglantine:

ache

thung chien kang me!

Lotze now thinking about the commerce
of crocodile mothers
in a poorly lit underworld,
some dry egyptian bread,
or possibly just papers sprawling
before composition.

He sings, “*Usura, Usura.*” And then, uncle,
the penalty that is not death
but silence. And the gossiping
middle-aged nurses with large breasts
emptying the pewter bedpan before vespers.