

## Six Poems

Brad Comann



### Buddhas

Polyethylene catches on parts  
of bodies tooled out of pink sandstone, and carts  
trundle the head-pieces off, to be eyed  
in a nearby shop, centuries of heads pried,  
cracked from torsos leaving bent knees  
behind, smooth as abalone,  
leaving thin robes folded back revealing  
one of the shoulders or a wheel  
etched In those meditating hands--Law  
of Cause and Effect now a flawed  
symmetry between walls of brick  
and mortar--those fingers like thick  
branches too commonplace  
for collectors who want instead the faces  
chipped from prangs expensive beyond belief  
although undecorated with squares of gold leaf  
attention saved for the bronze images  
that survived Burmese troops and the aging  
sunlight: only one of Him sits in the former temple  
where a monk trims a votive candle  
and the One looks immovable, eyelids on the verge  
of closing on us who surge  
by the altarpieced fast as the slowest walk,  
the visitors afterward

in the silence of those eyes perceiving  
our rib cage, our solar plexus, our breathing  
or does He look for the heat's thought?  
while in the shade of rotting  
trees a few of the world's teenagers hang  
around in dark bluetic hair, languish  
in Jim Morrison T-shirts, their hands busy, veins  
and fingernails glowing like copper insanely  
hovering over a *Game Boy*  
the size of an ancient tablet, with others enjoying  
a glance at war comics, at their first porn,  
as we might have done in Fu Manchu's braids, in worn  
out *Levis* although it's their day  
now, to want something else, to say  
*Why not this?*

using American words for their spleen and penis

**Lyric: Udon Thani**

Next to a cinderblock  
wall crowned with green  
and white glass  
a baby girl is naked  
below her tanktop  
a 50 printed on the front

She floats on toes  
across a powdery soil,  
hands cradling her plastic  
bottle, lips tugging  
on the formula

What train?  
What Thai mathematician  
has a window seat  
and gazes at the footpath's  
baby's butt? or thinks  
on the next step in a theorem?

Station bells chime all-clear  
Godling, running to a crawl

### **Show of Teeth: Indonesia**

Follow the signs when the road cuts  
left. Women's voices will start pleading  
with you, *Monkey love peanut*.

Given in, at a kiosk in the shade, near  
the stone gate to Monkey forest,  
gate to mythical monkey, tongues and ears

covered with dry moss. Inside the forest  
they have no love of trees; each sits  
by a trail waiting for you, resting.

You clutch that purchased bag  
of nuts, doling them out like chocolates  
although the monkeys look as if they'd gag

on one more bite, often dropping them--one  
at a time to the already littered ground  
then start to eat each other's lice, or run

at you, hissing to make you jumpy, a finger  
poking in your direction, to some purpose.  
Their show of teeth a kind of laughter.

### **Sex Trade**

Hours to the Northeast a Thai weaver sings  
of the living past  
lilting as she works that ancient silk loom

her legs dancing along to the shuttle  
until a tourist stops at her door  
thinking it's part of the mock village

She weaves along but to him it would  
be nice if she'd sing on top of him  
but apparently not

and he returns to his rental car a four-door  
to find another  
goddess under twenty no condom

before he flies home to San Diego

and the dead present *Have a good one*  
*weaver*



### **Penang, Malaysia**

1.

A Chinese courtyard  
necks of plumwine bottles top  
the cement walls--watch

how kites keep to the sky  
lengths of twine knotted together.

2.

Down a sidestreet, on a shortcut I took,  
a row of pigs pranced, they flew. O the heights!

I saw no rack of huge steel hooks,  
no butcher hosing off the steps to his shop.

That night asleep on a train, in a top  
berth, the pigs had grown: heels and pink tights.

### **Marginalia in a Guidebook**

"The danger of the road is not in the distance,  
ten yards is far enough to break a wheel."

-- Meng Chiao

When your five senses cower,  
obey your guide--the mind's  
one fear a fear of mindlessness.  
Muslims pray to a loudspeaker.

No *duty free*. This restaurant  
has moved to Jalan Lawa.  
Guesthouses, losmen, hotels  
all reasonable: try *The Majestic*

or *U Thong*. Buddhists meditate  
to the green smell of incense.  
You are a foreign body entering  
the blood stream! "Caning

or Death for Anyone with Drugs."  
The bemo and bus stations  
open late, close early.  
The Christians swear to God.