

OUYANG YU

## Snapshots of an Awarding Ceremony: Slightly out of Sequence

a.

I said didn't see any writers he said you wouldn't perhaps because they were hiding themselves at home writing I said well if they were not shortlisted they wouldn't turn up he said that's right

b.

I saw a man in his seventies getting his poetry prize a white man I saw a man in his late fifties getting his fiction prize a white man I saw a lot of white-skinned white-haired men and women around me peppered by brown people and yellow people who were the only ones sitting the weak ones

c.

a man read or rather recited from a play and ended his performance with a loud FUCK that caused everyone to applaud and shout and shriek with laughter in the presence of premier and arts minister a female the white woman behind me didn't seem to be very pleased but she didn't say anything

d.

a woman an old one asked are you vietnamese I said guess again she said you look like a vietnamese that I once taught in adult migrant education centre I said guess again I mean give it another go she said ah well I can't I said china chinese you know she said oh

e.

she asked when I got home why you came back so early is that because no-one paid any attention to you again I said no she said yes it must be like last time or every time but I said no I had fun thinking of my weariness my urge to say fuck my instinct about people I dislike my reluctance to go and congratulate anyone who's won a prize even the one I've judged to be the winner my wonderment why big names keep winning prizes why they make themselves so lonely and why so few people go to them to say nice things why they pat each other on their backs to congratulate themselves why people feel so important after they win but not before what makes a human being a full human being not a less or more one as I trudged towards my car somewhere near a city public bathhouse