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The orchid cactus looks out at the sea 曇花看海

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translated by Karen Steffen Chung 史嘉琳

How long have you been standing here
how long have you been watching
your skirt whirls up a thousand snowdrifts
your bangs blow wildly in the wind
I imagine you standing watching a bit lightheaded
imagining yourself into a wave

How long have you been watching?
even the night begins to feel restless
you extend your fingertips to stroke the night as though you
were petting a cat
I imagine you as a flower of a water sign constellation
coral not yet formed
translucent almost fluid

I would call you a night flower a flower that loves the night
a flower of one night
you stand in the heart of a cactus
taking an entire night one micron one millimeter one
nanometer at a time
with the deftness of a jellyfish lazily stretching
(leaning your cheeks on your hands)

Saying you would like to watch the rise and fall of the
moon a dream wander about
seeing desires coming and going you finally learn
that you have become a wave
in a twinkling you wither and drop into a viney sea
the infatuation of constellations deeply hidden
like intertwined algae never to be untangled

I told you before 我告訴過你

by Chen Yu-hong 陳育虹

translated by Karen Steffen Chung 史嘉琳

I told you before my forehead my hair miss you
because the clouds comb each other in the sky my neck my
earlobes miss you
because of the idle worry of the lane with the suspended
bridge and the alley with the grass bridge because of the
unaccompanied Bach slipping silently into the

river outside the city
my eyes my wanderer eyes miss you because the sparrows
on the parasol tree have all glided down to earth
because of the shattered glass of the wind
Because of the wall between the days I tell you that my
pores that long to sleep miss you
my ribs miss you my moonlit arms turned into wisteria of
the Tang dynasty in full bloom miss you too
I am sure I have told you that my lips because of a cup of `
burning hot coffee my fingertips because of the perplexity
of a night of revolving horse lamps because of a sky
spread over with blue cashmere
I can't bear to let you go