

# A.I.

## How else to resist? <sup>1</sup>

On Pathompon Mont Tesprateep's *Song X*

By Elizabeth Gabrielle Lee

A message in a bottle is carried by a stream, forever journeying. But here, *Song X* isn't the message, but a sand-crusted bottle, dusted with black and white 16mm grain. It takes on the role of a gracious usher, carrying the viewer through scenes of crackling flames, river water dousing, horses mating. There is nothing to be found at the end of the odyssey, but only to wake from a dream. Pathompon Mont Tesprateep's piece is an attempt of closing up the time-space gap with a departed friend. Following a dead soldier's journey in the pastoral landscapes of Central Thailand, the film is an encounter of a non place, suspended between the states of vigil and eternal slumber.

วางดอกไม้บานสะพรั่ง  
หอมอุ่นละมุน  
แสงสาดพริ้วเล็มใบหญ้า  
ไม่ช้าก็คงงงงาม

หากใครรู้บ่วงสายใย  
ผูกพันลับสน  
จะล้มตัวนอน  
ถอดถอนปล่อยกายตามฝัน

วางไทรผลตามลำตับ  
โล่งโปร่ง สบาย  
วิวหรือร้อยพวงประดับ  
แกมผ้าปิดบังร่างกาย

แก้มที่เคยฉีกยิ้ม  
สดางค์ที่เคยเก็บไว้  
สุดท้ายไม่มีประโยชน์ใด  
จะฝัน

Lay the flowers in full bloom,  
gently embalming.  
Blades of grass basked in light,  
not long till they spring.

Who knew of kinship  
That twists and binds.  
Lie down to sleep  
and let the body dream.

Lay anger to rest,  
to unburden.  
A scene of garlands  
shrouding the body away.

<sup>1</sup> Pathompon Mont Tesprateep, lyrics from *Song X*, 2016. Translated by Palin Anusinha.

Cheeks splintered by a smile;  
coins collected over time;  
rendered worthless in the end  
to resist.

The Last Village by Wanarat Chiyapan, 2004. Translated by Palin Anusinha.

Speechless, the moving image is a sonic reverberation of the Thai jungles and watering holes. Dialogue takes a back seat, in the driverless vehicle cruising on auto-pilot. Amidst the raging cicadas and windswept trees, the vacuum of silence emerges emboldened. In the face of logic, most often displayed in the systemic West, silence is refused as weakness<sup>2</sup>. An absence of words coupled with an inability (or refusal) to speak denies bodies from crooning themselves into being. How else can we resist the impulse of speech, a punctuator of place? How else, can we resist hasty chatter for other sounds to hum through?

วางดอกไม้บานสะพรั่ง  
หอมอุ่นละมุน  
แสงสาดทิวลิ้มโบยฟ้า  
ไม่ซำก็คงงงงาม

หากใครรู้บ้างสายใย  
ผูกพันสืบสน  
จะลืมหวน  
ถอดถอนปล่อยกายตามฝัน

วางโกรธลดตามลำดับ  
โล่งโปร่ง สบาย  
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แก้มที่เคยฉีกยิ้ม  
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A song awakening the dead,  
forever rousing.  
Consoling voices in the wind  
and water washes the body rising.

Innocence reflected  
in quivering eyes  
lead to a defunct destination  
of ghostly fantasies.

A song for wayward dances,  
frenzied, flickering.  
Inflamed noises, flames that dart  
and surge through bodies colliding.

The light bends and distorts  
forgotten memory  
seeking for release—

<sup>2</sup> Nina Valerie Kolowratnik, *The Language of Secret Proof*, 2019

how else to resist?

Song X (The Last Village's extended version) by Pathompon Mont Tesprateep, 2016. Translated by Palin Anusinha.

Though it is an attempt to pick up the trails of his bandmate's unfinished song, *Song X* is a refusal of completion, marinating in the bitter sweet of the liminal. It shuns linguistic absolution and prescriptivist articulation, opting to dwell in the lesser realm instead. Should *Song X* take on likeness of a punctuation, may it be a semicolon, drifting between a definite full stop and a hanging comma. A quiet interlude;

## Credits

Pathompon Mont Tesprateep

*Song X*, 2017

20mins 19secs

16mm & Super 8

1.33:1

Black & White

No dialogue

Directed by Pathompon Mont Tesprateep

Produced by Nuttaphan Yamkhaekhai

Co-producer: Danaya Chulphuthiphong

Assistant Director: Suphisara Kittikunarak

Cinematographer: Chukiat Wongsuwan

Art Director: Sorawat Mongkoljuntramaytee

Videographer: Danaya Chulphuthiphong

Still Photographers: Withit Chanthamarit,

Danaya Chulphuthiphong

Editor: Mont Tesprateep

Sound: Chalermrat Kaweewattana

Film Processing: Rolling Wild