

The Passing of Time

Fallen

Fallen leaves, stamped into the ground,
Crushed, they leave their imprints—
Little half-damp patches,
 Last echoes of the fallen leaves.

I remember you, little fallen leaf,
How, crimson-stained, you fell
And were trodden underfoot,
 With the others, swept away.

But still I see your imprint, little leaf.
You fell in a time of icy cold
And yet in so many tears, like rain,
 You left a silent echo.

You are not forgotten, little leaf.
Your soul has left its many-toothed stamp
Upon the path of life so many walk—
 And we remember you.

Deep Calls to Deep

On April 16, 2014, the South Korean ferry, the Sewol, sunk off the coast of Jindo, on the way to the popular Korean vacation resort, Jeju Island. On board were 475 people, 325 of which were students going to Jeju for their long-awaited high school trip. The accident, caused by a failure to observe safety rules and procedures, claimed approximately three hundred lives. In the week that followed, Korean citizens, praying that by some chance some might be surviving in air pockets underneath the surface, borrowed the yellow ribbon as a sign of hope; the insignia meaning "One small movement for a great miracle." The miracle never happened, but the yellow ribbon has continued in South Korea as a sign of remembrance for the lives lost.

April 16, 2014 – Introduction

It's 8:48.

A loud bang shakes the silence.

I am the sea. My

Ice cold waves awake from sleep,

And greet the tilting blue hull.

9:00 P.M. – The Night Before

The blue hull cuts through

My icy winter-chilled skin.

Students, families, men

And women start their journey,

Four hundred seventy five.

8:48 A.M. April 16, 2014 – The Ferry Sinking

I feel the sudden shift:

Fifteen degrees to starboard.

Ecstatic I rush

Into the cargo bay. I

Jump and swirl amidst the cargo.

9:30 A.M. – The Sea Claims the Ship

My journey goes on;

My giddy rush through corridors.

Into rooms I climb,

I splash. The blue hull rises;

White slips beneath my surface.

9:40 A.M. – 150 People Jump Overboard

They splash. I shudder,

Spraying my cold white foam. Yet

My rush continues,

Pressing through windows and doors,

While limbs flail on my surface.

10:17 A.M. – The Last Text Sent From the *Sewol*

“*Eomma.*” Still I climb.
 “This might be my last chance...”
 Glass shatters, I roar.
 “To tell you...” I climb ankles
 And fill corners. “I love you.”

Unknown Time – Park Jinyeong

I am ageless. I am
 The mighty sea; yet this girl
 Is so young, just twenty-two.
 “After saving you,
 I will get out. The crew last.”

11:20 A.M. – The Bow of the Ship is Submerged

I am the sea, the
 King of the water, yet I drink
 The rooms, halls, and walls,
 And guzzle down the white decks.
 It’s mine, yet I cannot laugh.

July 22, 2014 – The Last Victim is Found

’Til now they hunt me,
 Seeking what they cannot find.
 And still they haunt me,
 Two hundred ninety three dead,
 Eleven lost in my keep.

“*Hana-eui jageun*
Oomjikimi keun gijok—”

For a miracle
 They pray, yet it will not come.
 Their yellow ribbons mourn.

The people fear me.
 My hunger is quenched; the heart
 Of the sea is full.
 On the surface, calm and peace.
 I have swallowed all their tears.