

Death Charms & Songs

arranged for
dramatic reading and ritualistic movements
by Wai-lim Yip

In the spring when we lie down under the young cherry-trees,
with the grass green and the sun getting a bit warm, we
feel like sleeping, don't we?

[Chorus] At the tips of our fingers are trails of the wind.

In the fall when there is a little breeze and we lie in some
shelter, hearing the dry weeds rubbing against one another,
we usually get drowsy, don't we?

[Chorus] At the tips of our fingers are trails of the wind.

In the daytime as the drizzle strikes the lodge pattering and
we lie warming the soles of our feet, we fall asleep, don't we?

[Chorus] At the tips of our fingers are trails of the wind.

At night when we lie down, listening to the wind rustling through
the bleached trees, we know not how we get to sleep but
we fall asleep, don't we?

[Chorus] At the tips of our fingers are trails of the wind.

Having looked for a hollow among the thickest pines, we make
a fresh camp there. The wind blows on us, and we, rather

tired, lie down and keep listening to the rustling pines until we fall asleep.

[Chorus] At the tips of our fingers are trails of the wind.

The sky will weep,
The sky,
At the end of the earth;
The sky will weep.

[Chorus] The sky will weep
Trails of the wind
will weep
At the tips of our fingers
Trails of the wind
Will weep [Continue throughout the following section in a
subdued murmurs]

Listen! Now I have come to step over your soul. You are of the wolf clan. Your name is Ayuuni. Your spittle I have put at rest under the earth.

I have come to cover you over with the black rock. I have come to cover you over with the black cloth. I have come to cover you with black slabs, never to reappear. Toward the black coffin of the upland in the Darkening Land your paths shall stretch out. So shall it be for you.

The clay of the upland has come to cover you. Instantly the black clay has lodged there where it is at rest at the black houses in the Darkening Land. With the black coffin

and the black slabs I have come to cover you.

Now your soul has faded away. It has become blue. When darkness comes your spirit shall grow less and dwindle away, never to reappear. Listen!

DEATH RITE

Leader: The gates of Dan are shut.

Company: Shut are the gates of Dan.

Leader: The spirits of the dead flit hurrying there.

Their crowd is like the flight of mosquitoes.

The flight of mosquitoes which dance in the evening.

Company: Which dance in the evening.

Leader: The flight of mosquitoes which dance in the evening.

When the night has turned completely black.

When the sun has vanished.

When the sun has turned completely black.

The dance of the mosquitoes.

The whirlwind of dead leaves

When the storm has growled.

Company: When the storm has growled.

Leader: They await him who will come.

Company: Him who will come.

Leader: Him who will say: You, come, you, go away!

Company: Him who will say: Come, go!

Leader: And Khvum will be with his children.

Company: With his children.

All: And this is the end.

[Male and Female Voices]

It is above that you and I shall go;
Along the Milky Way you and I shall go;
Along the flower trail you and I shall go;
Picking flowers on our way you and I shall go.

[Chorus] At the tips of our fingers are trails of the wind.
Trails of our movement.
Trails of flowers
Trails of fragrance.
Fragrance of the Milky Way
At the tips of our fingers are trails of the wind.

[Male and Female Voices simultaneously with Chorus]

Ah, flowers that we wear!
Ah, songs that we raise!
— we are on our way to the Realm of Mystery!
If only for one day,
let us be together, my friends!
We must leave our flowers behind us,
we must leave our songs:
and yet the earth remains unchanged.
My friends, enjoy! Friends! Enjoy!

[Chorus]
At the tips of our fingers are trails of the wind.
Trails of our journey.

Trails of flowers.

Trails of fragrance.

Fragrance of our bodies and songs.

At the tips of our fingers are trails of the wind.

At the tips of our fingers are trails of the wind.

Trails of the wind, trails of the wind,
trails of the wind [until the male and female
voices have finished and continue, slowly thinning out]