Tint Journal

POETRY

Semantics of Selfhood: A Bilinguacultural Poem

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Illustration by Bianca A. Cosar

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1/ I vs ?: Denotations

The first person singular pronoun, or this very
Writing subject in English is I , an only-letter
Word, standing straight like a pole, always
Capitalized, but in Chinese, it is written with
Seven lucky strokes as ? , with at least 108
Variations, all of which can be the object case
At the same time.
Originally, it’s formed from
The character ?, meaning ‘pursuing,’ with one
Stroke added on the top, which may well stand for
Anything you would like to have, such as money
Power, fame, sex, food, or nothing if you prove
Yourself to be a Buddhist practitioner inside-out.

2/ Human & ?: Connotations

Since I feel the sunshine of humanity that had walked before me
Underneath my toes as a human/?, I would rather not kneel down

When two humans walk side by side, why to coerce one
Into obeying the other like a slave fated to follow/??

Since three humans can live together, do we really need
The joystick values of fascism to determine our fate as a group/??

Given all the freedom I was born with, why
Then why cage me within walls like a prisoner/??

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