

**JOHN YAU**

**THE PHILOSOPHER**

He sacrificed the vulgar prizes of life but his eyes danced with velvet spleen  
He threw out phrases of ill-tempered humor but tread the path of primrose dalliance  
He was often empty of thought but remained entangled in paradox  
He gave away his youth by the handful but hurrying thoughts clamored for utterance  
He was profoundly skeptical but utterly detached from any sign of obstinacy  
He went hot and cold but would fall into the blackest melancholies  
He writhed with impotent humiliation but his blank gaze chilled you  
He smiled with fatuous superiority but was often stunned and uncomprehending  
He made a loathsome object but was afflicted with high levels of mental depletion  
He delivered a series of monosyllabic replies but parts of him throbbed dangerously

He murmured a civil rejoinder shortly before immersing himself in grave thoughts  
He never wore an argument to tatters and was known to smile with fatuous superiority  
He sat on thorns in the belief that it would set his cumbersome imagination adrift  
He sighed deeply from a kind of mental depletion before smiting his snoring neighbor  
He stiffened his face into obstinacy so his thoughts could clamor for more attention  
He was aware of the one emotion that caused his limbs to run to marble  
He was detached from life even when his face was illuminated by extraterrestrial thought  
He gave her a baffled stare while pausing to embrace a sudden daydream  
He felt an unaccountable loathing lurking in the rebound of her words  
He had a colorless fluency that flummoxed others who were stumbling and silent

He believed his eyes shone with the pure fire of a great purpose  
He always waited until his scorn expired before attempting to speak  
He introduced the coaxing inflections of a child into his weekly lecture  
He was mistrustful of what any sign of zeal might do to his argument  
He pretended he needed to shamle away in order to encourage further sympathy  
He advertised his passions with sneers and pretended to hide behind an exultant smile  
He enjoyed what enticements came his way with astonishing unscrupulousness  
He airily lampooned his colleagues' most cherished accomplishments  
He needed to makes sure he did not release unguarded adjectives into the air  
He was the author of books no longer pertinent to the discussion

He had become a red-bellied cloud hanging motionless in the sky  
He grew contemptuously indifferent to the logic of public opinion  
He knew his best thoughts were covered with rare vegetation  
He was stuck between formless verbosity and passionless rhetoric  
He refused to be jaded by his extravagant gastronomical exertions  
He felt an unaccountable loathing at his need to toss off ill-humored phrases  
He did not want to fall prey to listless uneasiness or eager hopefulness  
He was afraid he was a filament in a sea captain's hostile imagination  
He expressed surprise by becoming a comical and deferential satyr  
He would never again be a poet walking in a valley populated by shadows