Jonathan Quang

9/25/15

HW #8

The Long Run

I wake up  
Time to go  
I see the school children pass  
Clean faces   
Taller than me

I am the boy who goes  
to that place  
the place of concrete and metal  
the place of ash and smoke  
the place of machinery  
going clank and zzz

In this very place in Europe  
I live out my days  
Standing  
Slouching

Amidst the smog  
Is a stream  
A stream as lifeless as the smog  
A stream of cotton   
Shooting towards me

In the dark room where I work  
I take the cotton and place it where it should dry  
I walk around, picking out dry cotton  
And feeding it into the machine

The finger leech we called it  
Too many children  
And too many fingers  
Consumed and gone

Some of us were tired  
When we sat  
He came  
Scolded us  
Whacked us  
Deducted pay

The money  
We needed the money  
Why else would we be here?  
I would say that the greatest pain  
Wasn't the scolding or whacking  
It was the loss of money

I stood there  
Eternally tired  
Eternally slouched  
Joints forever swollen  
Varicose veins  
Ulcers sprouting about my legs

At the end of the day  
Schoolchildren gone  
I walk during the night  
Too tired to pick up food  
Too tired to chew  
  
During nightly prayers,  
I kneel  
I pray for fortune  
I would pray more  
But my mind and body  
Have already fallen asleep

My family needs the money  
But I have to wonder  
Will those children outside  
Those children that go to school  
Get jobs as bankers, lawyers, or doctors?  
Will they make more money in one year  
than I would have made in five?