

J-son Ong

Ching Ming

On April fifth,
showers sprinkle the whole day
on the living and the dead.

All dressed in white
like apparitions, relatives
stroll toward Kong Meng San Crematorium.

Pink umbrellas and black wet shoes
line the walls outside the temple doors.
Four dishes of half cooked food are offered

before grey walls, ashes and bones,
rows and rows of small urns,
inscribed with the names of the deceased.

A monk in golden robes walks between devotees,
sprinkling chrysanthemums, murmuring blessings.

When the evening ends, a monk digs
a hundred blows to the temple's gong.
At the front door, a haloed street lamp
shines on silver drops of rain
spearing into darkness,
pattering a wet courtyard.