

Ch'oe Young-mi

AT THIRTY, THE PARTY IS OVER

Fact is,
the revolutionaries were cooler than the revolution,
the booze was better than the bar,
and that 'O My Comrade' anthem
sucked –
(though I did hum along to those corny love songs).
But what the hell –

the party is over,
the booze has run dry, wallets are emptied and, finally,
even *he's* left –
but, although the bill's been split, and they've all got their coats,
and even though the place is deserted –
I know there's someone still lurking
wiping tables clean for the boss,
remembering all the highs and shedding hot tears,
someone who knows every word of the unfinished songs,
someone – not him – who'll, maybe,
set up the tables by morning,
who'll invite them all back
who'll rig up the lighting and repaint the stage –

sure. But what the hell.

*Translated from the Korean by Kyoo Lee and Sarah Maguire with
The Poetry Translation Workshop*