

To Korea

For one with such geographical uncertainty, I wonder if this was really a smart idea.

Plane touching down, trembling hands pulling along a single red suitcase,
Wondering if I should hop back onto a plane at *Incheon* and forget about it.

'*Gwaenchanha, gwaenchanha*', everything will be fine, I think.

French, Spanish, Gaelic, Chinese – each unique and fascinating to learn,
But a language five thousand miles away from Scotland, my Scotland,
Is one for spending eighty-two bewildering brand new days dedicated to,
To this culture, this way of communicating, this beautiful country – *Korea*.

Although sometimes I grow weary in the fourth hour of our class,
Repetitions and conjugations, conversations and affirmations:
But the knowledge is quickly and abundantly filling me up,
Like sweet *bingsu* might do on one of these sweltering summer days.

And I will never forget the smiling faces of each class *chingu*,
Knowing that one day we will meet again here, and reminisce about everything,
The talks next to *Cheongyecheon*, laughing all the way home, using this new language
To express gratitude for each other, and for our chance to be here.

And on the days that don't go well, feeling lonely, getting lost,
Things not going quite the way I had expected,
There's something to learn, and something to remember, even if it takes
Standing on the *jihacheol* for two hours just to get home.

Then I push off on my bicycle at the side of *Han River*, and the breeze lifts my spirits;
It feels like my mind is freeing itself of all it's worries along with the water.
For now I can forget next week's exam, typhoon season, long walks to the market,
And come back to them later with a fresh mind and sun-kissed cheeks.

On a particularly stormy day during *jangma*, the rain falls while I read contentedly,
Korean stories interpreted word by word, each idiom and sentence to my native tongue,
Of flying hens and magical fish, blind guide dogs and the occasional person,
Which I too want to help tell to the rest of the world, as a translator myself.

On the crooked rooftop, in all of my imagination, I couldn't think up this view,
The city lights of *Seoul* scattered down below all small and busy.
And even now I don't have the words to describe,
How beautiful I find this place, and how wonderful you look to me.

에딘버러 대학교 이 기회 주셔서 고맙습니다.

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