

Dark and Clear Sleep

HWANG YUWON

Translated by Jake Levine

While drinking water alone
with the window open at night
he's like a dark night painted into calligraphy paper.

If you add cold water
and rub the ink stick on the ink stone
the dark night that's let loose
gathers in the water.

Even though we can't confirm whether tonight is
the thing that comes from the stick, the thing that comes from the stone, or
the thing that comes from the hand that's rubbing the stick to the stone

the night that gathers in the water is definitely
deep and
quiet.

The brush that buried the night has transcended what it means to be a brush and
all the places that were passed by the brush have become empty alleys in the
middle of the night.

The realness of the person that spent all night wandering around those alleys,
standing straight in the howling wind

or the heaviness of the weight placed on the paper prove
the unshakeable
unbreakable night.

Characters pressed with cold and clear wind
make the entire body of the paper feel cold.
Believing that his sleep will be as cold and clear as
the cold and clear night that moves across the paper

his night pools with dark and clear characters.
You can see the texture of the characters
as the season dries them up.

When I suddenly wake up
everything in the world
is drying out.

Even if I fall asleep with the lights off
that's how vivid the night is.

