Renewals

In the beginning was
the word that the Tyler Street
branch was coming down,
while all around the kids
who played hide-and-seek on the street,
amidst goblins and fairies from borrowed books,
were speechless with loss.
Then the bookmobile rolled in,
here and gone like the tinkling
of the ice cream truck on a summer day.
Sometimes they made their way
to Copley Square, where all around
old friends they'd found before
waited to be checked out
and renewed again and again.
But afternoons soon filled with homework
from school and home work with mom,
poking the sewn fabric out with a wooden chopstick
--more tickets, more pieces per hour.
So, in a drawer, the library cards now lay
buried under curling pages of S&H Green Stamps.
Later, their own children cried
for one more story, just one more,
and, recalling their days in the stacks,
they tried to go back on weekends
with the kids in tow,
but running out to Copley Square
was easier said than done.
And soon their children
and the children's children
no longer knew the thrill
of a finger run along the spines,
the catalog of yellowed cards in Dewey decimals,
the hush of hallowed haunts and whispered rhymes.
But one day the young
borrowed and renewed the elders' dream,
passing it from teen to teen and screen to screen,
until the hope was in our throats
the words were on our lips again—
a library for Chinatown renewed!

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Translated into Chinese by Ping Kam Chan

再生

開始時
消息傳來
泰勒街圖書分館要拆卸了
鄰近的孩子
仍在街上玩捉迷藏
借來的圖書
上面的小精靈和仙女
頓然間感到失落
啞口無言。
然後流動圖書車開進來
來去就像夏日的雪糕車
叮噹作響
有時人們要走到老遠的葛培利廣場
在那裡與老友邊談邊等
還書或續借再續借。
下午總有做不完的學校家課
和媽媽的家務
用木筷子翻轉縫好的布條袋
有更多的工單
每小時更多的件工。
因此在抽屜裡
現在放滿圖書卡
埋在捲曲的S&H綠色印花郵票頁下
後來他們自己的孩子又在叫嚷
再要來多一個故事
回想他們在圖書館的日子
試圖在週末
拖著孩子們一起去
但是要跑到葛培利廣場
說來容易做時難。
不久他們的孩子和孩子的孩子
再也不知道
手指在書脊上往來找書的樂趣
不懂發黃的圖書目錄卡上杜威編碼
感覺不到神出鬼沒的靜寂
和竊竊私語的詩韻。
但有一天
年輕人借來和更新老一輩的夢想
傳給十來歲的青少年
翻動螢屏上的一幕又一幕
直到希望在我們的喉頭
話在我們的嘴唇邊
唐人街圖書館再生了!