

2010

## Losing You in Chatuchak

Patricia Murphy

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/cutbank>



Part of the [Creative Writing Commons](#)

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

---

### Recommended Citation

Murphy, Patricia (2010) "Losing You in Chatuchak," *CutBank*: Vol. 1 : Iss. 72 , Article 9.

Available at: <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/cutbank/vol1/iss72/9>

This Poetry is brought to you for free and open access by ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in CutBank by an authorized editor of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact [scholarworks@mso.umt.edu](mailto:scholarworks@mso.umt.edu).

# ••LOSING YOU IN CHATUCHAK

PATRICIA MURPHY

“When we fall, it’s an ordinary sadness.” Robert Bly

Just one 125 Baht 40 minute cab ride  
and we’ve left the banks of the Chao Phraya,  
gone north to the 35 acres of stalls  
we’ve read is the world’s largest market.  
The cab drops us at Chatuchak, we’re stuck  
in a shopping hall of mirrors. Each turn  
brings floating water lanterns, chocolate  
crickets, chai tea, and steaming carts of curry.  
We start with a map but fail, so we  
follow the crisscrosses into corners at first  
vaguely familiar—antique toys, stamps,  
village shirts and coin wallets, royal silk  
placemats and runners. I’m not finding  
what I want, and I see a man eye your  
pocket. I shoo him. This startles you. You  
want to go to section 10, for accessories,  
to buy the obligatory pottery or wall hanging  
but over shouts of vendors I don’t hear you,  
and all we can do is stand in front of the fake  
Birkenstocks and scream at each other about  
whose fault is it that we came here.  
And then you walk away. A fit of temper  
you have always been prone to, but never before  
in a 35 acre market, with 9000 booths  
and 200,000 shoppers. All I can do is blink,  
stare up at the dangling dragon kites and wind  
chimes, stare out at the pale-faced tourists  
hoping the red-headed ex-pat slicing through  
the crowd is you coming back, but he has a young  
Thai on his arm. What is your goal? Would it

be romantic for me to chase you through  
the throngs? Or should we take separate  
125 Baht 40 minute cab rides back to Siam  
Square, stew in our hotel room until you feel like  
making love again? I back away past the  
hand-carved wooden candlesticks, the painted  
swadee statues. I'm not thinking, even, about what  
to do this instant. I'm thinking about me at 11,  
at an amusement park where my father had downed  
too many beers for two men his size. I dreaded that  
weaving, that slurring, but even worse, that anger,  
white hot and indiscriminate, and the insults that  
resonate in my memory more conveniently  
than praise. I was 11, and I left. I ran to the  
parking lot, hid behind a Pontiac. Hours passed  
before a security guard found me, and my father  
was so angry that for once he couldn't speak.  
In the market, I'm passing the dance masks, the  
1950's telephones, Louis Vuitton knockoffs,  
the pangolins and gibbons. Now you have your  
own potent booze. Descending through the stalls I  
wonder why I've chosen this, and by this I mean you,  
and I wonder why you have chosen this market  
to practice the perfect abandonment of fathers?  
I push my way to the main footpath, sun blazing,  
try to steal a seat out from under a Danish  
tourist eating Pla Rad Prig. Then I see you:  
rubbing your hands over your red hair,  
your face wearing a look like the one when we  
stood with your mother and watched her take  
her last breath. Then you see me: standing next to  
the mangosteen and pomelo. We approach each  
other without apology. We're going to try to  
find the right section, section 10. We're going to buy  
the Thai wall hanging or pottery. It will take some  
collapsing of defenses. It will take some syncopated fall.