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### Directions

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### Abstract

One language's logic is often another one's illogicality...

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## OUYANG YU

*Directions*

one language's logic is often another one's illogicality  
 how so, you ask, ah, there are instances in which  
 we just can't speak to each other without you intervening or  
 interpreting even though an interpreter is often looked down on  
 as no more than a dealer in words  
 exactly where you now stand: let's begin with parallel bars  
 which in her eyes is but double bars  
 for where you approach things geometrically  
 she accesses it mathematically  
 and when you cite uneven bars she may simply say:

oh, we call it high and low bars

that sounds almost as if she looked at it with an artist's eye  
 before a canvas whereas you looked at it sidewise, with a road-builder's  
 for what is uneven anyway, she wonders, when it comes to bars  
 there are other minor differences, too  
 he puts east first whenever he says east south west north  
 by contrast you begin with north when you say north south east west  
 it's almost as if there's a linguistic geography in which peoples are  
 conditioned by their localities & certain ones from the north must

necessarily

belittle those from the south as you go up north and come down south  
 placing at one strike the one above the other  
 but then, she says, hang on, why don't they begin with west  
 these people who call themselves westerners, thus self-imposingly

superior

that gets you and you kind of go: wow, i don't really know  
 setting off a roll of laughter from the rostrum to the back of the seats  
 if we put him and her together in an imaginary union  
 there will be interesting consequences for when she goes up the country  
 he'll say: i'm going down to the country, and when she says, should the  
 union

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dissolve one day as all unions do naturally after a period of time  
with the wear and tear of love: i'll have this matter brought before the  
court  
he'll respond in his logical manner by replying: oh yes, i'll definitely  
go up to the court for i'm not afraid that the sky might fall down  
which, in her common sense, would be equivalent to saying: i know  
the sky won't fall in, and, most frustrating of all, it is this highest state  
of morality that he would struggle to convey to her: that of being  
I-less, for she would have none of that. why, she cries, if i remain  
I-less, i would descend to the lowest of the low, not only without the i  
but also without the eye, worse, the *ai*, which, in his most illogical  
language means love

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**OUYANG YU** has published forty-three books, including a minority of self-published titles. His forthcoming collection of poetry is *The Kingsbury Tales: A Novel*, to be shortly released by Brandl & Schlesinger. For more information, please visit: [www.ouyangyu.com.au](http://www.ouyangyu.com.au)