

**Red Altar**

The idols, amidst  
the incense smoke are  
lonely and abandoned.

Tired at their  
desolate red altars,  
their sacred light  
slowly diminishes  
with the hollow wind.

Growing weary  
of waiting,  
they are undisturbed  
(the petitions no longer come).

Quiet and without breath,  
the whispers of mortals  
grow muted  
as their footsteps  
slowly vanish like  
the slow-curling  
smoke of  
joss sticks.

*David C.E. Tneh*