



北師港浸大建校15周年  
UIC's 15th Anniversary  
2005-2020

PRODUCED BY  
English Language and Literature Studies Programme  
OF  
Division of Humanities and Social Sciences



2020 ISSUE 003

# ELSEWHERE

— Communication and Connectivity —

English for Professional Communication Concentration



# Acknowledgements

## Submissions & Efforts

We are grateful for all the excellent submissions, which display such aesthetic sensibility and extraordinary writing skill.

We express our great appreciation to the contributors, the instructor, and all of our editors for bringing this issue to publication.

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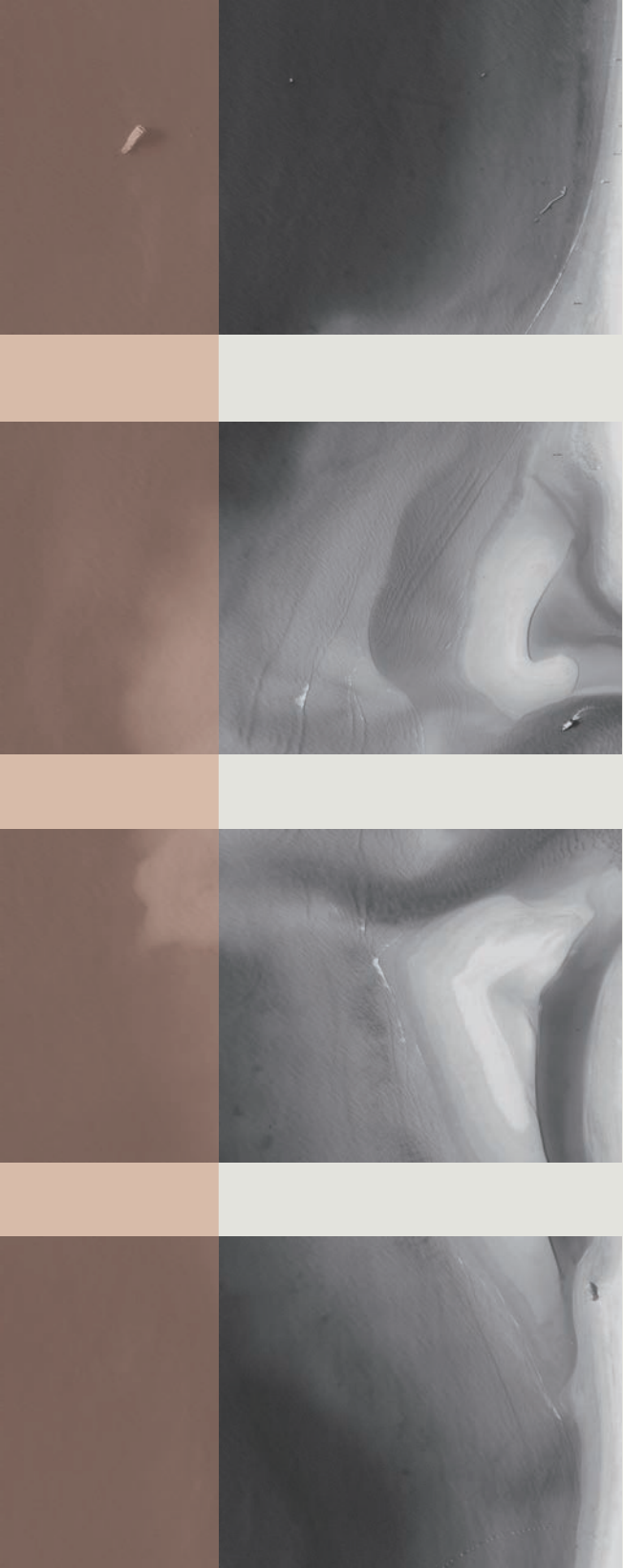
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Photograph from Jincheng Yan, Sri Lanka, Jan., 2019



# Welcome Letter

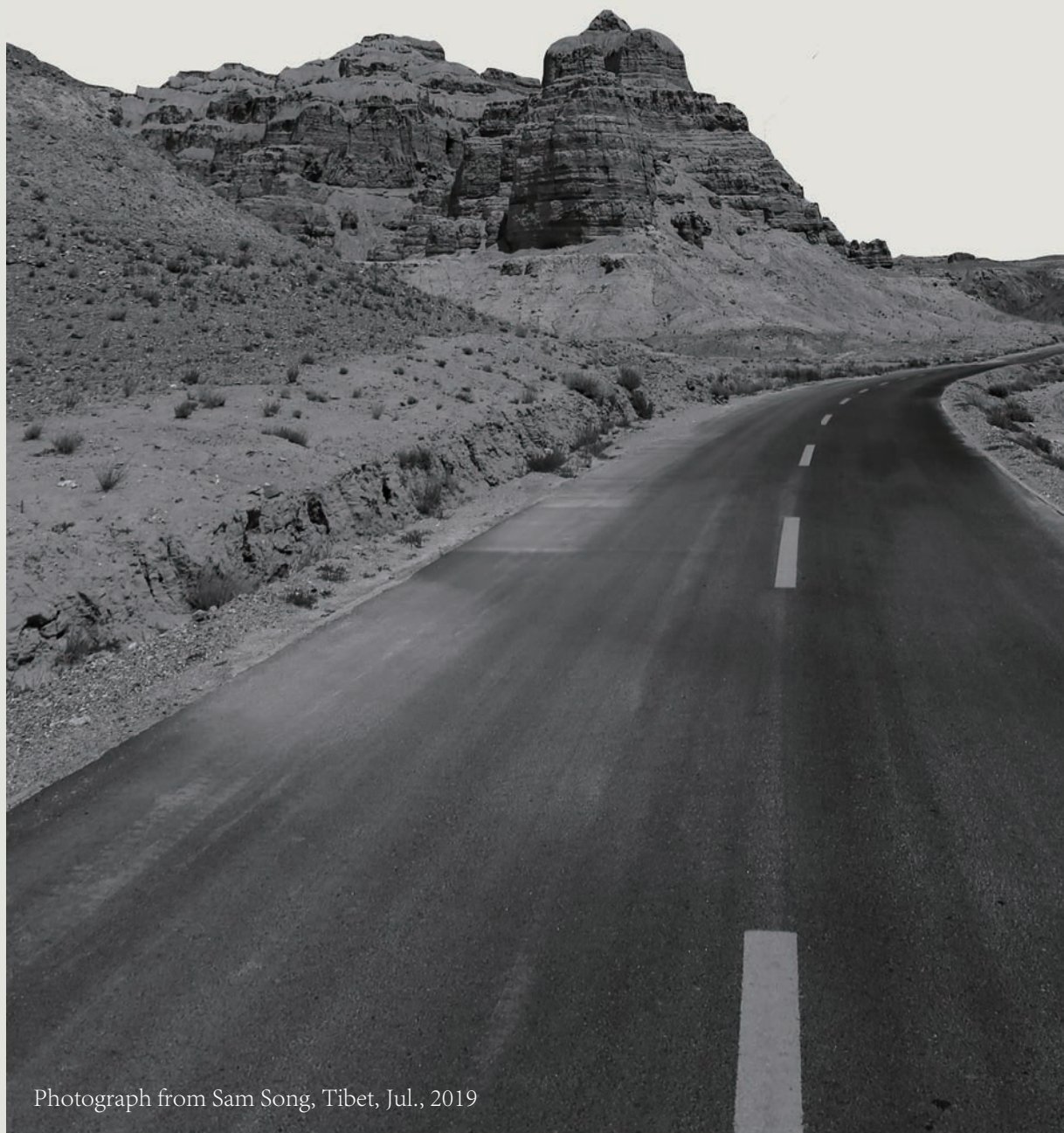


Appearing, as it does, in 2020, this issue of Elsewhere is special, as it commemorates the 15th anniversary of United International College. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, most of the editing and publishing work was done online and, thereby, embodies our theme of communication and connectivity. The styles and foci of the works included in this issue are diverse. We have included film reviews and a script for a stage play. We have used pictures shot by UIC students to create links between different literary forms. Such a layout is intended to symbolize the connectivity represented in, and uniting, each section. We hope they stimulate anticipation, as you journey through this issue.

The envelope poem on the facing page is a sample of the many references to communication and connectivity uniting this third issue of Elsewhere. It recalls the joy of communicating through writing and correspondence. This issue includes works composed by talented writers from the English Language and Literature Studies (ELLS) programme and features subtle observation, unique perspectives, and multiple reflections upon communication and connectivity in various contexts.

We strongly recommend you read the Reviews & Play section; The Same Moon; Three Seconds; Nostalgic Imagination: Poisonous Cure for the Sense of Loss; and When I Become You.

We wish you pleasant reading!



Photograph from Sam Song, Tibet, Jul., 2019

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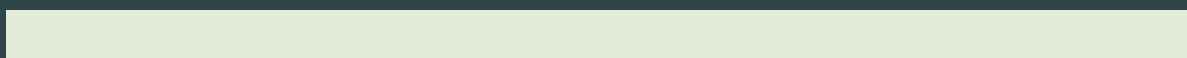
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## Nonfictions



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Photograph from Sam Song, Japan, Jan., 2017

# The First Snow

Roria HUANG

2008, Seoul, South Korea.  
That was my first trip abroad,  
just my mother and me.

I boarded the plane to Seoul. Although I didn't know why my mother took me to travel suddenly, I was especially thrilled and had no mind to find out the "because" since it was my first time abroad. I stood on tiptoe and stretched my neck for fear that I might miss any view overlooked by the aircraft window. It was difficult for a nine-year-old girl to hide the excitement and expectation in her little heart.

"Mummy, will I see the snow?" I looked back at my mother expectantly. My mother seemed to be stumped by my sudden questioning. She stared at me for a second, then smiled softly at me. "I know you've been looking forward to seeing snow for a long time. Mummy would like to satisfy your wishes. This is a tailor-make trip for my girl!" She patted my head and said softly. Although she quickly turned her face

back to kindness when I looked back, my sharp eyes caught her frowning and swallowing. Some doubts arose from my heart, but I still didn't take it seriously.

"The weather forecast shows it may snow these days, depending on your luck!" The tour guide told me after we got off the plane and got on the tour bus. As a child who lives in southern China and had never seen snow, I spent five days waiting for the snow devoutly with the deepest hope. Unfortunately, it didn't snow for these five days. I looked at my mother helplessly. "It's okay, we can't see snow this year, but we can come again next year." My mother touched my head and smiled to me. When I saw the smile imposed by my mother, I felt even more uncomfortable.

At noon the day before we left Korea, we had lunch in a restaurant as usual. People

who came here to enjoy their lunch were not in a hurry because the restaurant was deep in a mountain path. The shopkeeper served us with a hotpot which was curled by the snow-white smoke. The sizzling of the hotpot mingled with the chuffed laughter of people who were drinking Korean Soju. The restaurant had been surrounded by this cozy atmosphere all through the meal, which made the winter day seemed warmer. I looked out of the window, only the trees swayed by the cold wind. I looked at the delicious food in front of me, but I couldn't feel happy. My mother beside me looked at my lost eyes and felt sad for a while.

Suddenly, the restaurant poured out the screams and was full of laughter and shouts. Although we could not understand Korean, we could still feel the excitement. "Snowing! Snowing!" An uncle spoke to us in English with



Korean accent. We rushed out of the restaurant immediately and watched the snow drifting in the sky. Happiness and excitement hang on our faces. I stretched out my hands and waited for the white snow to fall down on my black gloves. "See! Snowflakes are really flower-shaped!" My mother cried out excitedly, pointing to the snowflakes on my gloves. We laughed delightedly in the snow. This was the first time I learned that winter could be touched and joy could be seen.

My mum saw my sheer joy and cried out of blue. I stopped playing with the snowflakes on my hands and looked at her doubtfully. "Mummy, what happened?" "Do you know, my girl? You have told me several times that you want to see the snow. Now I am so gratified that I made your dream come true," my mother was sobbing, then she took a deep breath to adjust her mood. "Actually... Before I came to Korea, I was diagnosed with cancer and I had to finish an operation right after I get home. I don't know



Photograph from Sam Song, Japan, Jan., 2017

what will happen after the operation and I don't know if I can be with you to see your favorite snow. Now I have achieved your dream, I am really happy." I couldn't stop crying after I heard what my mother said. Her tears just stopped and I stirred them up again. We hugged and wept in the snow. A few drops of water fell on my mother's pale blue coat. I could not tell whether it was my tear, or the snow melted by my mother's love.

Now my mother has recovered for a long time after the operation, but my memory of my very first snow will never fade away as the illness of my mum. I will never forget the warmest snowy day throughout my life. Because of this sudden snow, my mother and I went closer. A snow not only brought us a good memory, but also made us understand each other's intentions.

# A “Good” Impression

Max MA

I remember that it was on my seventh birthday, my mother and I sat down around the table. All lights were off, except for the shining candles on my birthday cake. My mother was in a black dress with white patterns. I noticed that she even wore her only gold necklace. When I was young, I dreamed of becoming a famous musician. How wonderful it would be to play the piano or the violin in front of hundreds of people on the stage!

Before blowing out the candles, I finally told my mom that I wanted to study music. Incredibly, my mother agreed to my request, making me too surprised to say a word.

“Now let’s choose an instrument to buy,” my mother said, with a smile on her face. “A piano? A violin?”

“Maybe a violin. It is cheaper than a piano.” I knew my mother would buy me a piano if I chose it, but I wanted to save her some money.

From that moment on, my journey in

the music world began.

On an otherwise unremarkable day, my mother took me to my violin teacher’s home. I felt nervous because I didn’t know whether I could make a good impression on my teacher. I was brought up in an environment where most people thought first impressions count, so I kept thinking how to communicate with my new teacher. If my memory serves me right, I was not good at communicating with strangers, which worried me a lot. However, as a little kid who was easy to be distracted, I soon forgot my concern, and started to explore the surroundings along the way. The air was filled with the faint fragrance of winter jasmine. There were some birds singing on the trees, which made me feel very comfortable. Everything I saw along the way seemed vibrant. Green grass swung in the wind. Lovely clouds moved slowly in the blue sky. Even an unnoticeable little stone could reflect the bright sunshine. We soon arrived at the apartment where my teacher lived.

“I’ll pick you up at five this afternoon,”

my mother told me. “Go upstairs! Your teacher is waiting for you.”

I went upstairs alone. When I knocked on the door, a strong feeling of tension came over me again. “How to spend these few hours with a new teacher? Will this teacher yell at me if I make some mistakes, like some strict teachers I have met in my school?”

After a few seconds, a young lady opened the door and led me to a room filled with music stands and chairs. I noticed she wore glittery earrings and a delicate silver necklace. In my eyes, she was so noble and elegant. Later I knew that this young lady was my teacher. As soon as I took my violin out of the case, the teacher started to teach me some basic music knowledge. I listened very carefully in case of missing something important. Her gentle voice took the tension out of my mind. Then, the teacher took out her violin which was bigger

than mine, and seemed much more expensive. It looked like an artwork, rather than a normal instrument. She showed me how to press the string and use the bow to create different sounds. Under her guidance, I learned how to play a song called “Little Star”.

“Now I’ll give you some time to practice what you have learnt,” my teacher said to me. “Try to make some progress.”

In the next two hours, I practiced the same piece more than a hundred times. I didn’t take a rest or drink any water. I wanted to let my teacher know that I was a diligent boy. I wanted to make a good impression on her. Unfortunately, I began to feel dizzy. It felt like my eyes couldn’t see clearly, and my ears couldn’t hear clearly. It turned out that I was too tired. After drinking some water and eating some candies offered by my teacher, I felt better.

“Among so many students I teach, you



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are the first one who practiced so hard in the first lesson. However, you need to know that things will develop in the opposite direction when they become extreme. To become an excellent violinist, you need to combine exertion and rest,” my teacher said to me earnestly.

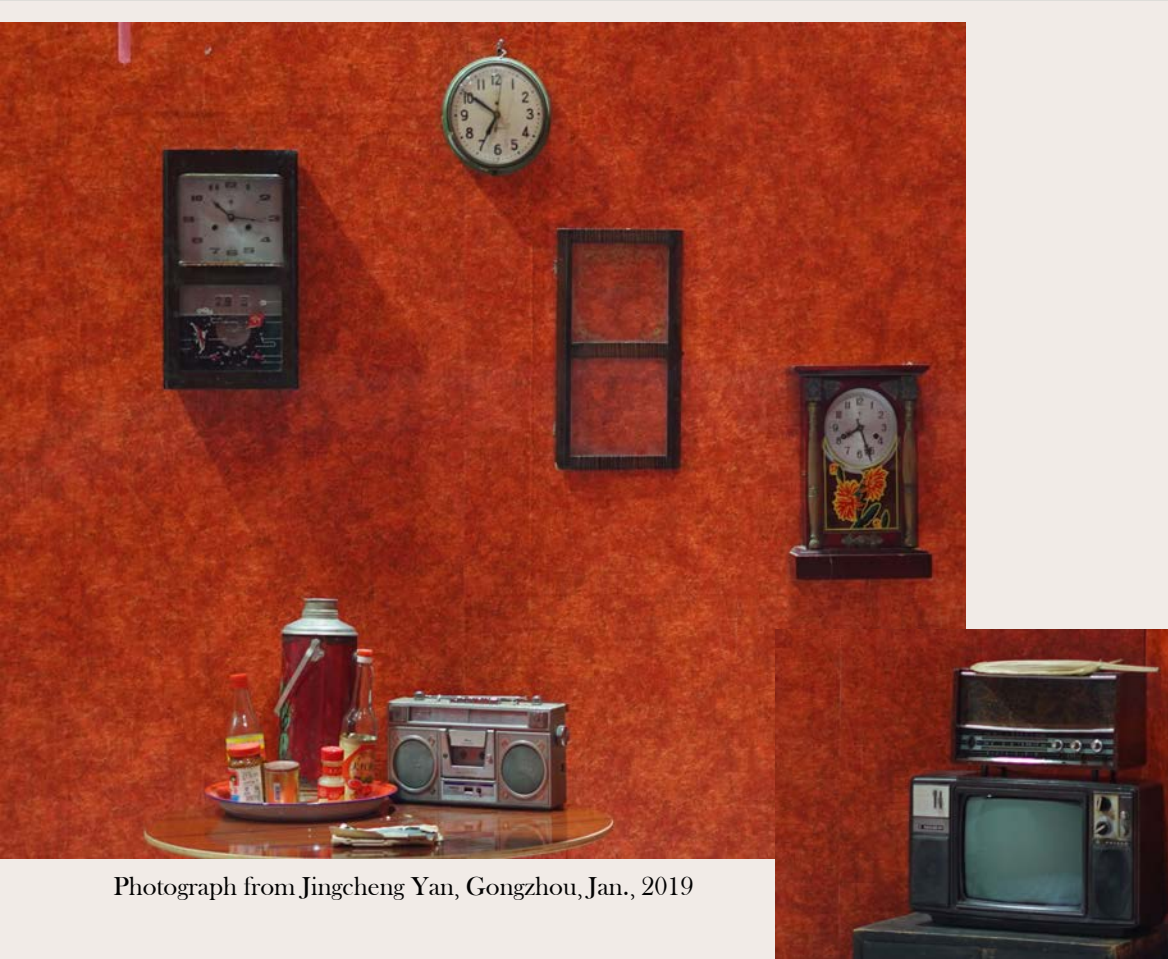
I nodded.

When I was thinking what I wanted to say to my teacher, she said, “That’s all for today’s class. You can ask me any questions if you want to, or just chat with me until your mother comes to pick you up. But it seems like you don’t like to start a conversations.”

I nodded again.

After about half an hour, my mother came to take me home. She chatted with my teacher for a while, and thanked her for spending nearly half a day teaching me music. I didn’t know whether I made a good impression on my violin teacher, but I did know that I was her first student who practiced the same music piece so hard and continuously that eventually, I showed symptoms of hypoglycemia.

Now I am a grown-up man. I have met numerous strangers and communicated with different kinds of people. I admit that making a good first impression is still important for me, and it usually happens between strangers. The most annoying part of communicating with strangers is that although you try your best to make a good impression, the final result is sometimes out of your control. Just like an old Chinese saying goes: a watched flower may not bloom, but an untended willow may thrive. You never know what impressions you will make on others until the last moment of the conversation. Perhaps that is why I still think communicating with strangers is extremely challenging for individuals in a lifetime.



Photograph from Jingcheng Yan, Gongzhou, Jan., 2019

# Flat on the First Floor

Eric HAO

I was sitting in the living room and playing my Play Station when my mom came to me. “How long have you not been to that flat?” my mom asked. “Which flat are you talking about?” I was a little confused. “Of course the one you lived in when you were little,” mom said. “Since it was rented out,” I replied.

Mom’s words reminded me of the tiny damp flat which was on the side of the street. I lived there with my parents before I went to middle school. It has been around 8 years since the last time I went back to that flat. Whenever I think of it, I have mixed feelings. The flat carries all my childhood memories, good ones and bad ones. But now when I look back, even bad memories can also make me nostalgic. I couldn’t stop thinking about those things that happened in the past. Memories overwhelmed me.

We lived on the first floor of the apartment block. Since the apartment block was surrounded by three other buildings, we could hardly see the sunlight in our rooms. The flat was dark and filled with moldy smell of damp

wooden furniture. Mom always complained about our damp flat while taking the clothes out to dry in the backyard at noon.

We had two dogs. One was named Mikey and the other was Bull. They stayed in the room during the day and went back to the backyard to sleep at night. I used to spend most of my time fooling around with them in the backyard. Sometimes mom got rid of her work and joined us when she was not busy. She taught them to sit still, wait and prone. Also, she gave a reward to whoever followed her order. Our dogs sometimes fought for food, but mom never stopped them fighting. Instead, she enjoyed watching and laughing at them. The battle between them didn't last long because Bull liked Mikey. Sometimes, they might let go of their fight and did some sneaky things together, like tearing apart one of the pillows in my mom's bedroom. They really loved breaking things, and the walls were covered with their scratches. So, my mother had to repaint the walls when she tried to rent the flat out. I didn't remember how much the rent was, but it was not large sums of money.

It was a rainy August Sunday night when I left our flat where I had been living in for 13 years. I helped my parents put our stuffs onto the car, and we got ready for moving to our new home. Mom asked me to say goodbye and give some apples to Granny Sun who lived across the street. Granny Sun loved me so much and she used to give me many little toys. She lost her son when we were going to move out and she seemed to be sad and helpless. "You have grown up," she patted me on the shoulder. "Now you are leaving as well." I didn't know what to say, so I just said goodbye and ran away. She passed away a few months later due to a heart attack, but I didn't know that until years later.

"Don't leave the television on if you don't play your games!" Mom's voice pulled me back to reality. Indeed, it has been too long since the last time I went back to that tiny flat. Even though I can still go back to that flat if I want to, I never did. The reason is that while I may be able to return to that place physically, I will never be able to go back to the place in my memory.



Photograph from Mingsong Yang, Eastern Europe, Jul., 2019



# The Lost Rabbit

Carrie CHEN



Photograph from Jingcheng Yan, Gongzhou, Oct., 2018

“It is grandpa! Grandpa is coming!”  
Hearing the very slow sound of footsteps and walking stick, I was yelling.

Although there was a long distance between our apartment, grandfather always came to see me. Every time when he came, I got something new and interesting from him without exception. On the day that after my six-year-old Birthday, the familiar footsteps and the sound of walking stick came again. It was getting closer and becoming clearer. Therefore, I pressed my ears tightly against the door, stomping excitedly and thinking what grandfather would bring to-day. At that time, I did not know that it would be a turning point in my life.

It was 3 p.m. I had arrived home from kindergarten already. The sun shone through the glass into my eyes and also gave a big hug to my grandfather when he walked in. My eyes shifted from grandfather to the box that held in his left hand. Vaguely, grandfather was saying something at that time but the box was so attractive that I could not hear and remember what it was.

There was an ordinary cardboard box with some little holes on its surface. Suddenly, the box moved and made a rustle sound. I was trembling all over with fear and stepping back without thinking. In a hurry and panic, I broke a piece of glass by accident, which attracted my grandfather’s attention. He was old at that time with pale hairs. Looking at a skinny hunchback man holding a crutch in right left hand and doing his best to come as fast as he can to protect me from danger, I felt safe and tried to kick that strange box gamely.

“Oh, do not kick that,” he said gently.  
“There is a rabbit inside.”

My grandfather bent down slowly with the help of the crutch and smiled with wrinkles on his face. He was such a deeply caring person,



Photograph from Mingsong Yang, Eastern Europe, Jul., 2019

a darling old man. Grandfather opened that box and carried the rabbit out gently.

“It must be scared just now.” He stroked the rabbit which was trembling with fear, still gently.

“A rabbit! I have a rabbit now!” With a perfect shriek of delight, I stood on the sofa and jumped up vigorously.

“This is your birthday gift. Do you know why I bring a rabbit for you?”

“Nope”, was my unconcerned answer, all my focus was on this little white furry guy.

“Because we were both born in the year of rabbit... I hope you can take good care of her...” Grandfather’s voice was becoming smaller and smaller...

The sun had put back its dazzling light. The soft light at 4 p.m. was warm and comfortable. “Can I go outside and play with the rabbit?” I begged. “Sure. But not too late...” His voice was not loud at all so I had to get closer to him, moving from the living room to the kitchen. Before he had finished speaking, I held the rabbit and rushed down the stairs like a rocket.

Sometimes I chased the rabbit on the lawn and suddenly ran to it, excitedly rubbed its fur with my hands. And sometimes I grabbed it when it was ready to run and laughed at how it was huddled like a snow ball. I even disturbed the rabbit while it was eating grass. How rude I was! However, I did not know at that time. I was lying on the lawn with sweat that broke out all over the body, watching the sun setting down. The sun was orange, like a big salted egg yolk. Unconsciously, I closed my eyes.

In the haze of my consciousness, it seems like I had forgotten something. "Where is the rabbit?" I woke up in an instant and shouted. It was almost dark evening and the sun had gone down already. A chill wind blew across my cheek and dried my clothes. I looked around confusedly, and tears filled my eyes. There were only few minutes until supper. Nonetheless, who cared about the supper? I stamped my foot anxiously because of my irresponsible and lack of care. "Have you ever seen a white rabbit..." "Excuse me, have you..." After running all over the place and asking many strangers, I was disappointed when they shook their head every time. The cold wind of the night stabbed me like many needles. Tasting salt in my mouth, I could not tell whether it was my sweat or my tears. With fear and regret, I huddled up and sat in a corner, scratching my hand with my nails. I dared not to go home.

The rabbit was lost.

At the end of the day, I saw a huge strong shadow walking towards me. A power lifted me up and held me in arms, gently like my grandfather but much stronger than him. I curled up in a warm embrace, then all things in front of me became black.

My cute little rabbit stayed by my side when I woke up the next day, with a note:

***"Take good care of the little rabbit and don't lose it again. Love you forever, grandpa."***

The sun shone through the chink of the curtain and gave me a gentle hug instead of my grandfather.

It was 8 a.m. in the morning. Everything inside my mind told me to apologize and tell the good news to my grandfather. Unexpectedly, the bad news of grandfather's death came first. I even had not been able to express how delighted I was when I saw the

rabbit again. Tears ran down my cheeks. I held my rabbit tightly but gently with silence.

My grandfather had gone...

Smelling the pungent and strange disinfectant, I was taken to a ward. White, is all over the room. White walls, white cases, white sheets, white furry rabbit, and grandfather's pale hair... Despite the fact there is sunshine outside the window, silence made the room ice cold. I crawled to the side of the bed with the rabbit in my arms.

"I've learned how to be gentle now and I will take good care of her..." I whispered.

It was 12 o'clock. The sun made every effort to restore the warmth of the room as well as my heart. I felt warm again as if I was in grandfather's embrace. I held the rabbit gently and left the ward.

The trace of tears on the bedspread was gradually wiped away by the sunshine.

# When You Go to Thailand

Cornelia CAI

Despite the hot weather, you're not able to say no to the beautiful sunshine, so you walk on the street in Chiang-mai with a coconut in your hands. It tastes sweet and fresh, which is a comfort for you in the extremely hot weather. When enjoying the coconut water, you spot a group of middle-age men and women wearing hats and sunglasses. They talk and laugh, looking incredibly delighted. They hold their smartphones and take photos. They're typical Chinese tourists you can find in any tourist countries. If you know it, you know it. If you don't know it yet, you will notice them around the world easily in the future.

According to Annual Report of China Outbound Tourism 2017, published by China Tourism Academy, China was the world's largest tourist source with 130 million times of citizen's traveling abroad. Specifically, among the 130 million times, 9.8 million of them were for Thailand. Such a huge number means that when you are in Thailand, you'll meet 28 Chinese tourists in 100 international tourists. Of course, now you are one of them.

There are two main travel styles: explor-

ing by yourself or being led by an experienced guide. Being a youngster, you're not willing to travel in a group led by a chatty guide. More significantly, you don't want to be surrounded by a bunch of middle-aged people who can easily embarrass you at any time anywhere without notice. Sometimes they're so impressed by the temples that they marvel and take photos with lights on, but you can neither keep their voice down nor turn off their lights. Sometimes they ask shop assistants questions in Chinese, but you can't judge them because the only English they know are "hello", "bye" and "thank you". During the incredibly long trip, they'll ask you to take hundreds of photos for them, to find some products in duty free shops, and to translate the English instructions. You do all of these for them, but you'll find yourself annoyed rather than enjoy. Thus, you want to explore your journey with people at your age, who share similar values with you.

A month ago, Air Asia told you that they were on their big sale, so the return flights between Macao and Chiangmai only took 1000 RMB or so. Then you invited your friends to



Photograph from Jincheng Yan, Sri Lanka, Jan., 2019

have a trip with you. As they really wanted to refresh from heavy study and work, they accepted your invitation. Being a group of young and energetic people, you don't want to sleep in a luxurious five-star hotel like the middle-aged do. You want to live in a cosy house provided by the local, so that you can experience the local life. By browsing some popular websites for accommodation renting, and comparing the locations, facilities, prices, and comments, you found some economical accommodations. With a quick plan, you set up and arrived here in Chiangmai.

Looking at the money changers at the airport, you realise that you haven't exchange your money into baht yet. When you walk to the changers, you hesitate because there's a pair of Chinese old couple waiting in line and arguing with each other.

The woman says, “你怎么不早点在

国内机场换好钱呢？” (Why didn't you exchange money ahead at the airport in China?)

The man keeps his head down, counting his RMB, “我忘了这回事了。” (I forgot that.)

“快点，别人等着呢！” (Quickly! Others are waiting for us!) The woman urges.

When you wonder who others are, you notice that the couple both have a bright orange hat with the name of a travel agent on it. There's a group of old people who also wear the same hats standing not far away from them. Beside this group is a younger man holding an orange flag and using his smartphone. “He's the guide. Perhaps he's getting contact with the driver to take the old people to the hotel.” You think.

When you walk towards to exchangers, your friends stop you, “It's much cheaper

outside the airport.”

“But how can we take a taxi without baht?”

“Don’t worry. We have Grab It’s Thai Didi. We can pay by Alipay.” You’re surprised, not at the convenience of travelling in Thailand, but the preparation your friends have made! They’re lazy daily, but they become experts when taking a trip.

You get on the taxi and enjoy the scene of the city through the window, then you find that Chiangmai is not as commercialised as you think. It’s around 5:30pm-time for commuters and students to go home, so the roads are crowded with cars. Your taxi is stuck on the road beside a river. You keep the car window open as you really enjoy the breeze.

Then you notice that there’s a Chinese restaurant next to your taxi. Inside is the same group of people you met at the airport. Sitting by several tables in circle and having traditional Chinese food, they look so content. Some of the old folks smoke outside of the restaurant and talk. You can hear them clearly.

“还是吃中国菜好啊，哈哈。” (It’s suitable for us to have Chinese food, hah.)

“对啊，吃那些什么咖喱，还是不行。” (Yes, I can’t adapt to Thai food, like curry.)

“幸好还是跟团来，有中餐。要是跟孩子们来啊，他们全跑去吃那些泰国菜啦。全不理我们这些老头。” (Fortunately, we’re in a travel group, so we have Chinese food. If we come with our children, we have to have Thai food. They don’t care about what we want to eat.)

Then your taxi drives away, arriving at the host’s house, which is unremarkable and locates on an ordinary street. Except for other houses, there’s a garage and a store beside the

house. Inside is a small and rectangular wooden table, a side table with some fruits and instant noodles on it, and a refrigerator. Opening the refrigerator, you find different kinds of drinks, jam and cheese. When you ask the host whether those are free for you, he answers “sure” with a welcoming smile. Then he helps you to carry your luggage to the top floor-where your room is.

Your room isn’t big, but it’s clean and tidy. There’s a double bed, a sofa, two lights, a bathroom and a tiny balcony. You enjoy the sunset glow at the balcony: the sky is pink with a few clouds. As the breeze comes, you can smell the orchids. Pied Bushchats fly and sing around-they are eager to go back to their nests at sunset. Sometimes a motorbike passes, making some noises. But that doesn’t disrupt you, because you’re getting close to the real daily life of Chiangmai.

“Where do we go to eat tonight?” You’re interrupted by your friends.

“Let’s go to the night market and have some street food!” In fact, you’re already starved and can’t wait to enjoy the local Thai food.

“We can go down to ask the host where we can get the money exchanged and where the night market is.” You’re astonished by your friends because you have already forgot that you don’t have baht in your pocket.

The night market is lively but not crowded. There’s a row of booths on both sides of the street. They sell different kinds of food: Tom Yum Goong, Gaeng Daeng, Pad Thai, Khao Pad, Gaeng Keow Wan Kai, and other snacks you can’t say no to. Under the bright yellow lights, they look so alluring that you forget that you have to keep an eye on your weight. Standing in front of a booth, you can’t decide which one to buy: Khao Soi Khun Yai or Khao Kha

Moo Chang Phueak?

When you're torn between them, you're disrupted by an old lady, “小妹妹，这些都是啥啊？” (Sweetie, what are these?) From her accent, you can tell she's a Cantonese, but you don't want to reply her in Cantonese even you're a Cantonese because it becomes more convenient for her and she'll put up more requests. Out of politeness, you answer her with patience.

“那这些，你觉得哪个好吃啊？” (Which one is tasty?) Her eyes are full of expectation.

“Can't you buy and taste them by yourself?” You've already had this sentence in your mind, but you can't say it. You can only reply, “我还没买，不知道呢。” (I haven't bought yet; I don't know.)

“你看，阿姨在那边买东西，你能过来帮阿姨翻译一下吗？阿姨不懂英文，不

能砍价！” (Look, I was buying something over there. Can you come and translate for me? I can't speak English, so I'm not able to bargain!) Saying this, the woman points at a booth across the street. The booth is crowded with a group of middle-aged people. You recognise them: they're the same group of people you met at the airport and restaurant. You blame Chiangmai for its smallness, having you encountered those old gentlemen and ladies three times a day. Hearing the sound from your stomach, you want to reject her but you can't, because she'll insist on asking you to help her. Thus, unwillingly, you go over there, and have a look at the booth and the vendor, hoping the vendor can feel your unwillingness from your eyes. He's selling dried durian monthong and other Thai snacks.

“问他，如果我们每人都买一包这个，能不能便宜点。” (Ask him, whether it can be cheaper if each of us buy one bag of



Photograph from Guanni Huang, India, Jun., 2017



Photograph from Jincheng Yan, Sri Lanka, Jan., 2019

this.) Pointing at the dried mango monthong and looking at you from time to time, a middle-aged man solicits you to ask the vendor this question. However, you think the price is reasonable since it only sells for 100 Thai baht, which means it only takes 20 RMB for one pack. But still, you have to ask. You do so and the vendor shakes his head, “This is the cheapest.” You reply those middle-aged people, then they leave with complaints.

Looking at their backs, so many things come up in your mind but you fail to tell them: these old people come to Thailand but give up such delicious food due to its price! But it’s more than that. Although following a group isn’t a perfect choice for you, it’s a good option for the old who want to explore the world at their age. Unlike you, they didn’t have an opportunity to explore abroad when they were young since China was in turmoil and all kinds of transportation hadn’t developed yet. Even in this electronic era, they can’t even use cell phones as smartly as you do, let alone downloading foreign applications. They’re used to Chinese food and culture, so it’s hard for them to adapt to foreign food and manners. You’re lucky since in the twentieth century you can explore and adapt different cultures at the young age. Thinking of this, you buy a bag of dried mango monthong.

# Knight of Love

Ura BAO

Have you ever seen a wolf, a living wolf? A wolf is very fierce. A wolf's body hair is like that mottled land. A wolf's eyes are sharp and deep. King of the Moonlit Night. It leaves such an impression for most people. Anyone who sees it for the first time will be amazed, and even subdued by its arrogance and kingliness. These creatures who mostly live in tundra and forests have such firm eyes. If someone is lucky enough to be exposed to them, he will be surprised to discover that what flows in their icy blood is a kind of emotion with warmer temperature and they are more affectionate than us.

Wolf runs extremely fast, reaching about 55 kilometers per hour. Its endurance is also very preeminent. They are capable of running 20 kilometers at a speed of 60 kilometers per hour. Wolves are social animals, so they mostly travel in groups. And the wolf-pack is generally dominated by family members with 2 to 30 members. Even though they have an agile speed, they will not adopt such a quick pace when choosing their mates. Once a mate is selected, they will stay with the mate for their whole life. However, if their partners die for

them, they also choose to end their own lives to accompany their partner forever. Just like a seagull hovers over the sea and calls for the return of his mate until he exhausts all efforts and fall into the ocean, sinking to the bottom of the sea and die. Imagine for a moment when a she-wolf was unfortunately locked in a cage: on a cold winter night, heavy snow was driven away by the north wind and she was about to be buried. Her mate used his body to shield her from the wind and snow outside the cage. Eventually, she died, and they were all dead. Until the last second, they were still dependent on each other in the snow. His body was next to her body just across the fence of the cage, and the snow under them turned into ice. At that moment, only sweet and bitter memories were left: they ran wildly on the desolate grass, sieged prey together in the woods, snuggled on the hill and cried to the moonlight to make a promise of love. There is no chance to see the green leaves sprout again; there is no time to raise their child. Their bodies were chilly and time was locked forever.

Wolves, like other animals but more so, have a more serious hierarchy. They will also be strict with themselves, maintaining their

relationship with care in order to find a good life-long partner. Their intelligence quotient is highly developed, and they use all their abilities to communicate with their partners through smells, calls, and physical movements. The price of their loyalty is to bet on their whole life: they give out the purest, most sincere and responsible love. It is expensive to love. You give all. You press on the pause button. You crash to the perpetual bottom. Every creature has the right to choose a partner. You can enjoy multiple loves at the same time like a fish, or you can stick to a single love for life like a wolf.

You may never meet or notice a mantis in your life. They look a bit fierce, like natural

warriors, with two sharp knives in their hands. Such a little soldier can sacrifice himself for love. The female mantis will eat the male mantis' heads during mating in order to stimulate their spouse to ejaculate, and ensure that the semen continues to flow into their bodies. Since the head has a nervous system suppression center, once the "gate" is out of control, the "river" of love will surge into the female praying mantis. In addition, eating male praying mantis can also provide fertilized eggs with sufficient nutrients. We have never witnessed how thrilling their love is, but we know that when love breaks out, desire burns to their climax, then the next second, they will choose to sacrifice for love. What supports



their sensibility is their rational love, giving up their spouse's reason for love, and dedicating one's reason to love.

Human can marry, animals can mate, plants can spread seeds, and even single-celled or cell-free organisms can reproduce offspring. Reproduction is the harvest of love. No creature can live without love. We all long for love.

So much love held in a lifetime. So much held in love in a voice, a motion, an eye contact. We may fall in love with someone at first, beyond all things in the world. Perhaps we are like the fledglings that we will definitely do it without hesitation. When we get older, we

may find that the world is not pure. All fantasies about love are dreams, whereupon we hide our love in the darkest corner of our hearts. We advanced a few pounds of tears, thinking that we had healed the scar with oblivion, and our hearts were strong enough to be indestructible. But when a sincere and full loving heart is naked in front of you again, suddenly, the softness of love broke through the heart wall we painstakingly built. We are still willing to be knights of love, for that moment of sudden heartbeat, gradually rising of temperature, reassurance embrace, soft words, sweet silence, trustful eyes, charming smiles and eternal companionship.



Photograph from Mingsong Yang, Eastern Europe, Jul., 2019

# A New Home

Kelsey ZHU



Photograph from Ruofan Hang, Zhuhai, Apr., 2018

Summer faded away on the day when the summer vacation ended. In that summer, the three years when I raced with time in the high school ended as well. I am finally going to a new stage of my life. Surprise, curiosity, tension, fear, all these complex feelings filled my heart. "What are you thinking about? You are going to the university in a few days. Are you happy?" Mom's voice pulled me back to real life. "In fact, I'm more scared." I am a person who has a hard time integrating into a group in a short time; however, I can not endure the loneliness as well. My best and only friend now is my neighbor, whom we have been good friends since kindergarten age. Although she is an outgoing and lovely person who is popular among the peers, for me, she is always the only one around

me. But this time she was unable to accompany me, I was going to school in the south of China, and she was admitted to a school in the north. Of course, my mother also understood what I meant, and answered, "You should try to be brave and get along with others. I know you are timid and introverted, but if you do not speak, no one will know what you want to get."

On the starting day of school, It took me five hours to go to school by air. The new campus has not been fully constructed yet. Freshmen lived in the old dormitory area which is far away from the teaching area. The buildings looked very old, and almost every wall had large black stains on it. The golden and shinning sunlight which shone on the wall seemed to be blackened as well, so that the sun didn't look so warm any more. The facilities of the dormitory building were also not very good; there was no elevator, and I was unfortunately assigned to a room on the fourth floor which was the highest floor. I slowly climbed with a luggage as heavy as a rock. The sun was too blinding, and the sweat kept falling from my forehead into my clothes. All these made me no longer expect where I would live in the future, and I could not imagine how terrible the "new life" would be. As if a century had passed, I walked close to the door of my dormitory. When I opened the door, I saw a girl with long hair got up from the bed quickly and greeted me with a smile, "I'm glad to meet you. My name is Christina." "Hi, I'm Kelsey." After a few words, the atmosphere in the room became awkward. I could even hear the sound of a needle fall on the ground. I also pretended to be indifferent and began to look around the room carefully. Although the room was small, it was very warm and completely different from the exterior appearance of the building. This gave me a little comfort.

I opened the suitcase and started to





Source: <https://unsplash.com>

sort my clothes. "I'm going to have lunch with my friends, do you want to go with me?" I stopped what I was doing and quickly turned to answer her, "No, thank you." "Well, bye." A brief conversation ended again, with me alone in the room. Actually, I had been hungry when I deplaned, and I really wanted to accept her invitation, but ... how could I describe the feeling she made me? The tone of her voice and the way she spoke were very cold, which made me feel distant and even a little scared. Then it should be impossible for me to become a good friend of her. I shook my head and continued to keep packing. Time passed minute by minute, and the outside quickly became dark. Christina was back, and to my surprise, she had a bag in her hand, which contained a cute little cake. "I bought you dessert on my way." Another short sentence, I took it and said, "Thank you."

For the next few hours, I still didn't have the courage to talk to her, even if some nonsense I still could not open my mouth. She didn't, either.

At night, I tossed and rolled in a strange bed for half an hour without falling asleep. When I turned around for the umpteenth time, I heard sobbing sounds coming from the bed opposite mine. I hurriedly turned on the light, lifted Christina's quilt, and asked what was wrong with her. To my shock, she suddenly hugged me tightly and burst into tears, "I have never slept alone, my mother and grandma have never left me, and always take good care of me. I really miss them." Her words also made me feel homesick. But facing her fragileness, I did not shed tears, "I miss my parents, too. I believe they miss me as well. All we can do is to live happily every day and then we can go back to see them. It's okay, let's sleep." I touched her hair, trying to comfort her bad mood. She raised her head, looked at me with tears in her eyes

and asked softly, “Can you sleep with me?”

She held me all night without letting me go. The distance between us gradually became closer.

Since then, almost every day, she stuck to me like a kitten. We ate together, went to class together, decorated the dormitory together, and chatted until midnight. It turned out she wasn’t as cool as she seemed; she was not difficult to get along with at all. I also knew the truth later that on the first day we met, because she didn’t know how to invite me, she was actually eating alone. The small cake was also brought to me specially, because she was worried that what if I had no time to eat. She also said she didn’t dare to speak to me because I looked indifferent. Until that night, when she felt lonely and afraid, she could not help crying and wanted to depend

on me. That is who she really is, friendly, cute, and need someone to accompany her. It also turned out that we were both pretending to be indifferent to protect ourselves.

Now we are both juniors, Christina and I have moved into a new dormitory for a long time. The new dormitory area is beautiful with a sense of design. Everything is different from the old one; however, our relationship has not changed. I still remember the note I left her after waking up that day: Don’t worry. We will live together every day in four years, and I will take good care of you.

Photograph from Baomu Song, Germany, Jul., 2018





# Poems & Pictures

2

Poems & Pictures

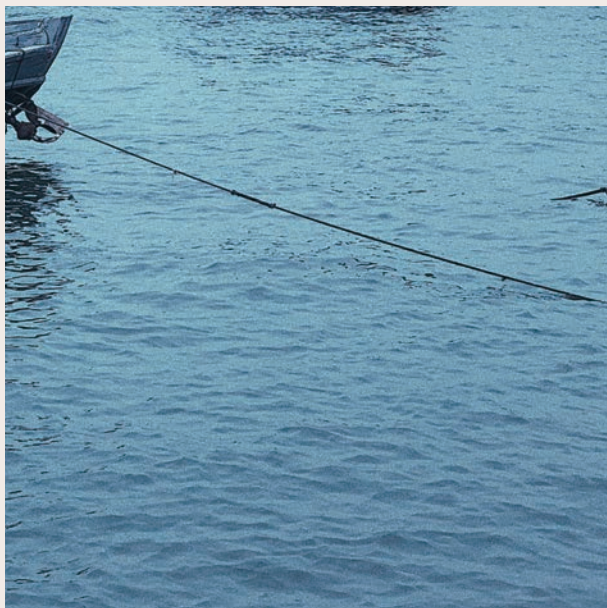
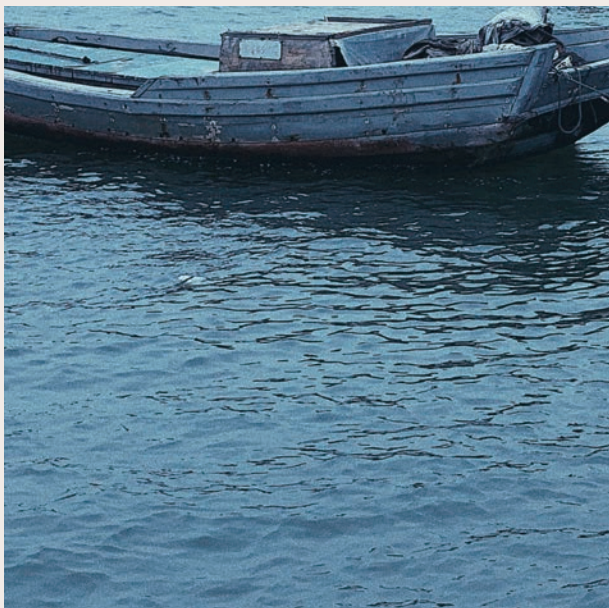
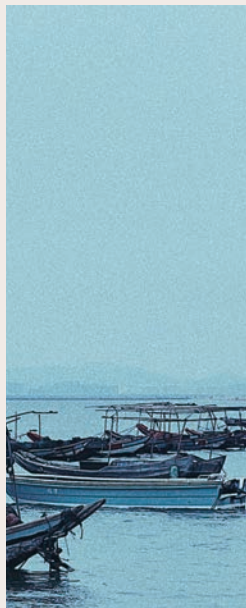
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1-----Send You a Memory

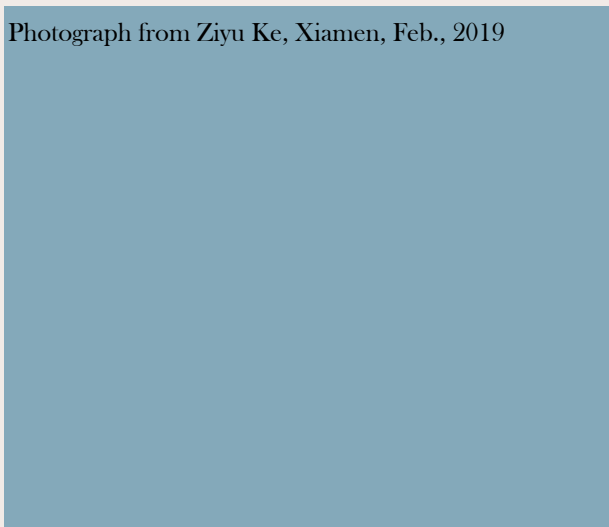
2-----Revival

3-----Seagull

4-----The Wall



Photograph from Ziyu Ke, Xiamen, Feb., 2019





Photographs from Mingsong Yang, Prague, Feb., 2019







Photographs from Mingsong Yang, Prague, Feb., 2019





## Send You A Memory

Jojo WU

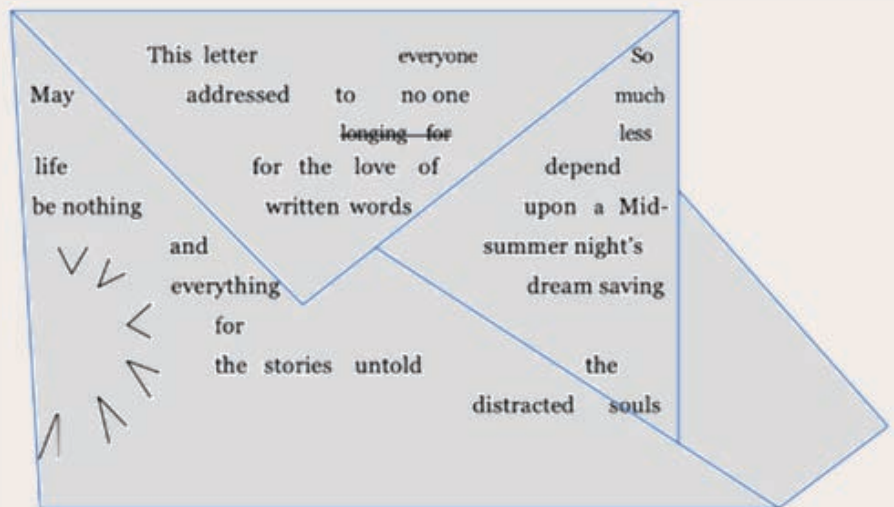
This letter addressed to no one/everyone,  
for the love of written voice is held  
by a quiet and talkative one.  
Life is nothing and everything  
for the stories untold.  
So much / less depend  
upon a midsummer night's dream then,  
the distracted souls are saved in the end



Nowadays, the pleasure of writing with ink on paper has been long forgotten.

This envelope poem tries to recapture the joy of handwriting, of communicating with old-days tools – the smell of paper, the sound of a fountain pen, the texture of each word.

Inspired by reading Emily Dickinson Envelope Poems, the poet randomly grabbed a piece of waste paper and fold it into the shape of an envelope (as you can see there is scribble on the lower left side). It is very interesting that the



crafting of the poem so relied on the pattern of the folds. Each angle acts like a boundary of thoughts while such limitation provides another space for literary creation. Particularly, it brought out the poet's memory of reading *The Red Wheelbarrow* by William Carlos Williams, by its conciseness and imagism.

This project intends to present a way of remembering – remembering the taste of original thoughts, the beauty of fragmentation, and most importantly, the joy of writing.



## Seagull

Ashlie LU

Strong as a huge rock,  
Energetic, lively and  
Active like the waves, enjoy the  
Gaiety brought by the breeze, and ever  
Undaunted by the storm,  
Light is what I always go after,  
Laughter is what I bring to the world.



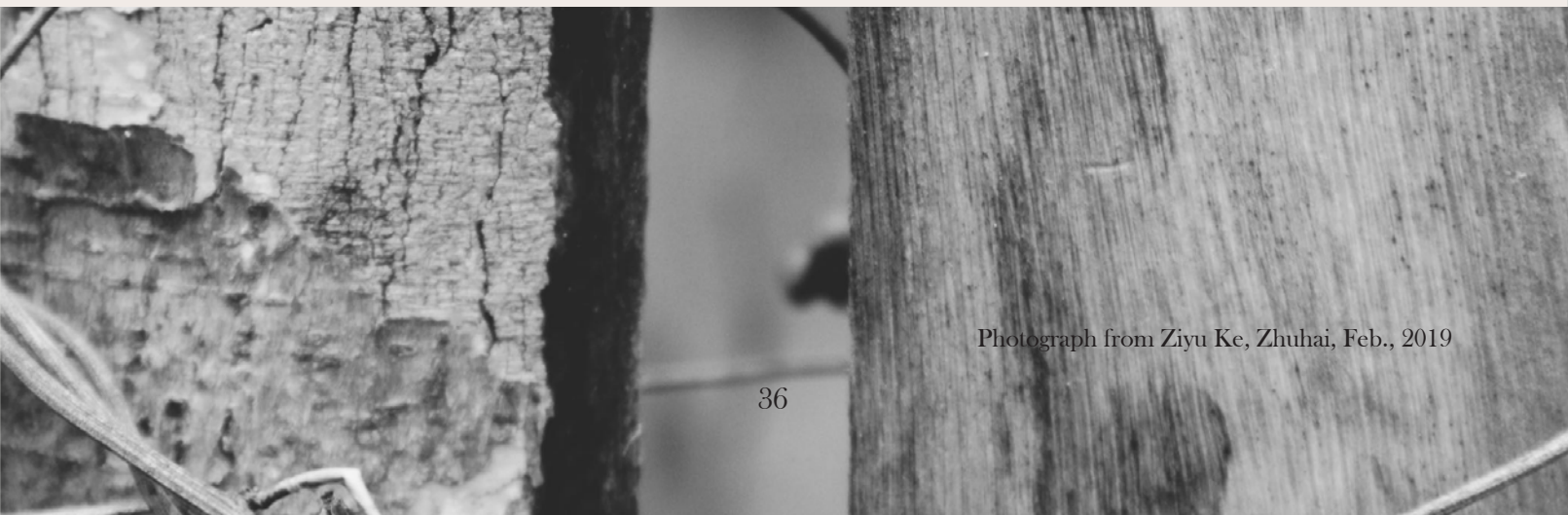
Photograph from Wenxin Wu, Bali Island, Jun., 2019



## **Revival**

Ashlie LU

Wind rolls the sea waves  
Skylarks sings on the champaign  
I feel like awaked



Photograph from Ziyu Ke, Zhuhai, Feb., 2019



## The Wall

Tess SUN

A tedious creature dreams,  
The most gracious soul,  
Driven by his love,  
Sluggishly being drowned.

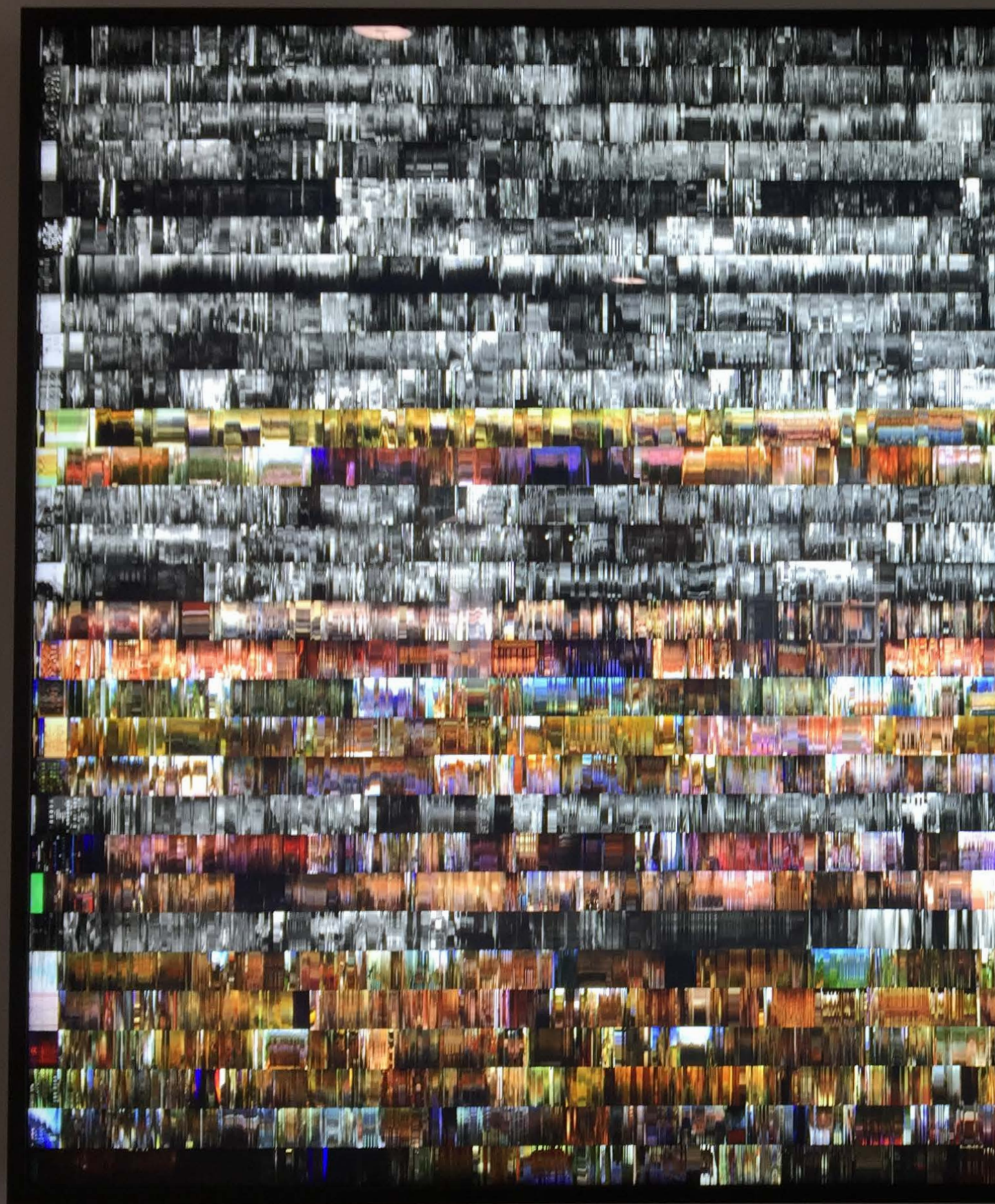
He doth love thee,  
Fairest eyne with brightest shine.  
The romance of two,  
Will be locked in the unbeatable wall.

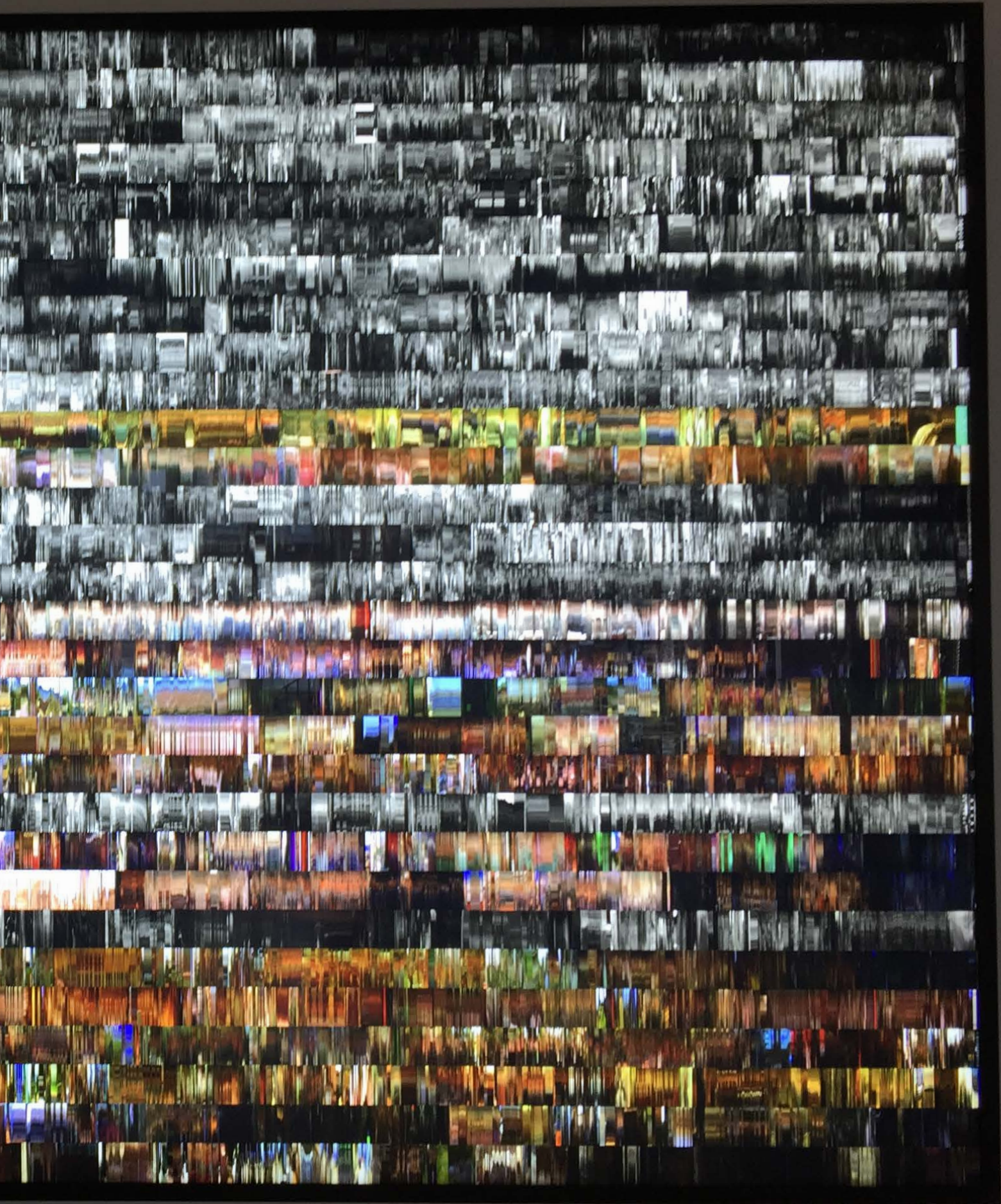
Just a witchcraft blinds thy thirst for love.  
Cupid's sword merely emerges once,  
Then flies.

Melt thy hidden veil of likes,  
You are in destiny combined.



Photograph from Ruofan Hang, Hong Kong, Jul., 2017





Photograph from Baomu Song, Netherlands, Aug., 2017



Photograph from Wenxin Wu, Fuzhou, Feb., 2019



Photograph from Ruofan Hang, Hong Kong, Jul., 2017



Photograph from Sam Song, Shenzhen, Oct., 2018



Photograph from Qiuling Yan, Guangzhou, Jan., 2020



Photograph from Yezi Chen, Tokyo, Jan., 2019



Photograph from Jincheng Yan, Sri Lanka, Jan., 2019

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# Fictions

STORIES

# 3

Fictions

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Ice in the Fire-----2

Letters, Twitter and-----4  
Ultimate Cyborgs

1-----The Wife

3-----Field

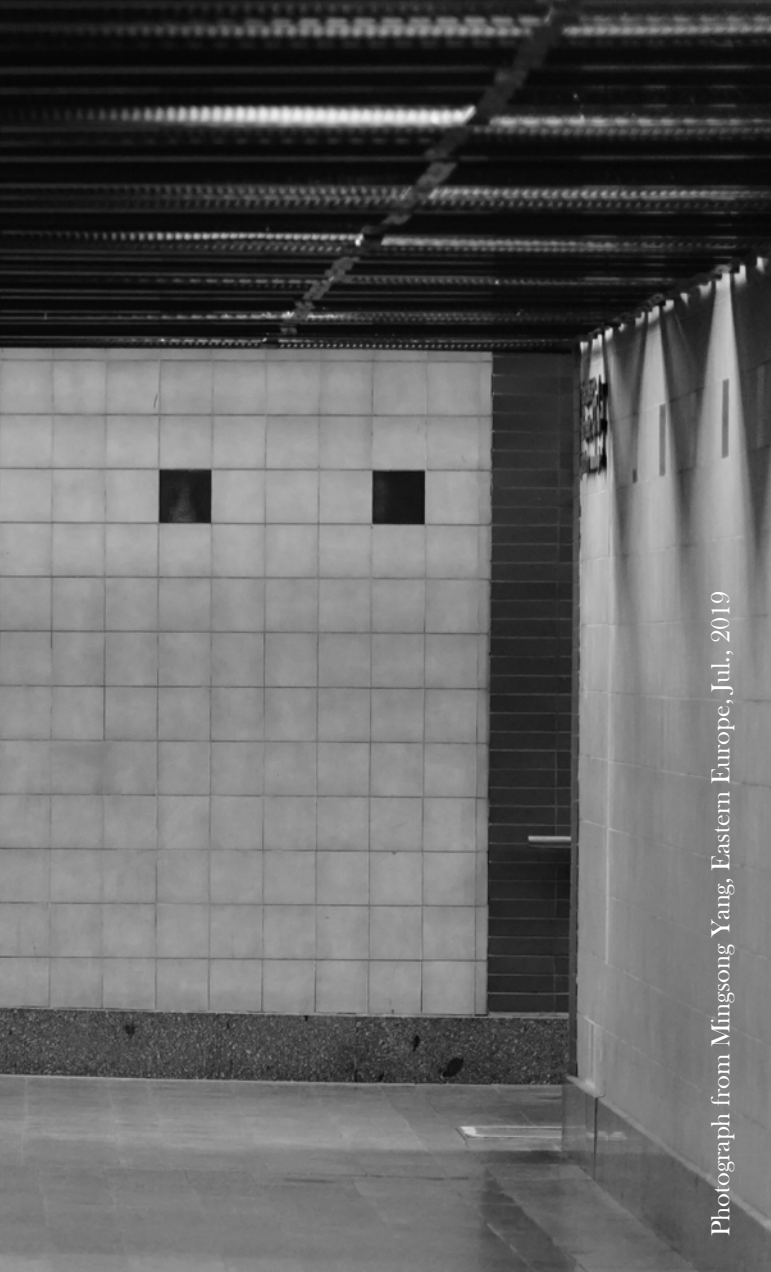


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# *The Wife*

Angelika LI

Osborne Smith became a detective after his wife died. “It’s time to go.” In the living room, Edward speaks to Osborne. Neighbors called Osborne antisocial except Edward Jones, who is Osborne’s. Actually, Edward is not a professional assistant. He is Osborne’s roommate, which means he must bear this pessimistic man and is often forced to participate in some bloody cases. Edward is different from Osborne. The beauty of life is much more important than the cruel cases, Edward always insists.



Photograph from Mingsong Yang, *Eastern Europe*, Jul., 2019

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"Today will be wonderful." Edward says to Osborne.

Osborne shoves his hands in his pockets and looks up at the ceiling. He stands there a good while, squinting, wondering what sorts of concrete-wall anchor bolt would be best for the job. And then he puts on his navy suit and does up the top button of the

black shirt.

"Leave the top button undone if you are not wearing a tie." Edward continues.

"I'm not some urchin who is renting out deck chairs," Osborne protests. "Before definitively buttoning it up."

Now, they finally get out of the house.

---

But at the dooryard, within a minute, there is a lanky man rushes out of the opposite house.

"Please! Please help my wife! She was stabbed! And there is so much blood... blood...oh my god, what should I do..." The lanky one cries, kneeling on the floor, holding the head with his red hands.

Edward walks over and pats the lanky one's shoulder, when Osborne puts on the gloves and enters the opposite house. "Everything will be fine. We will help you. He is a detective," Edward feels so sorry for his neighbor. "Would you mind showing us your house?"

Mr. Bennett, their neighbor, is crying. He and his wife have been here for two years. But Osborne and Edward have hardly seen them. Mr. Bennett is a hospital security working night shifts that he usually comes back in the morning and goes to work at night. Mrs. Bennett, a business

woman, has earned lots of money. She often curses her husband because he makes less money. To Edward, Owen is always smiling and speaking gently even if his wife is dissatisfied with him.

When Osborne enters the house, he finds no trace of dust in every room except the bedroom. In the bedroom, a thin woman with blond hair in silk pajamas is lying straight on the bed. Her chest is full of blood. The wound is about 3cm long and right in the heart. There are no signs to show that the woman was struggling, so the murderer must be an acquaintance and familiar with the body structure, Osborne

thinks. The woman's eyes are closed, perhaps she was killed during sleep. But it is also possible that the murderer closed her eyes after the killing.

"When did you leave your home last night?" Osborne asks.

"As usual. About 8:30 p.m. so I can arrive the hospital before 9." Owen replays.

"And when did you come back this morning?" Osborne continues to ask.

"About 7 a.m. and then I found her dead." Owen's eyes turn red.

Edward is a little confused, "Did you find out that

your wife had any unusual behavior yesterday?"

"No. She was the same as usual. But I know my wife and one of her partners have some disagreements because of funding issues."

"Do you know his name?"

"Er... Michael." At this time, the ambulance comes and takes his wife away.

When they go out of the house, an old woman comes over and says, "Yesterday I saw a big guy come to Owen's house and I heard the guy and Owen's wife quarreling."



Photograph from Baomu Song, Shanghai, Apr., 2019

"Really? What time was it? What did the man look like?" Edward asks.

"About half the ten. I didn't see him clearly." After saying that, the old woman turns back to her own house and shuts the door.

After that, Osborne asks Edward to get the job record of the hospital. It shows that Owen indeed started working at nine and left at half the six. The identification report shows that in addition to Owen and his wife's fingerprints, there is an unknown fingerprint in the bedroom. At the same time, it shows that his wife died between 11 and

12 o'clock last night. Has Osborne read the report, he goes to find out who is Michael — he is a suspect. According to Owen, Michael is very tall and big, which is similar to the description from the old woman. But it is strange that the unknown fingerprint is tested to be a woman, and no one knows Michael in the company. Who is Michael?

In the evening, Edward goes out for investigation. Osborne stands in front of the television, thinking the case happened this morning. He slowly twists the wedding ring on his fingers as if looking for something else to say. He still finds it painfully difficult being

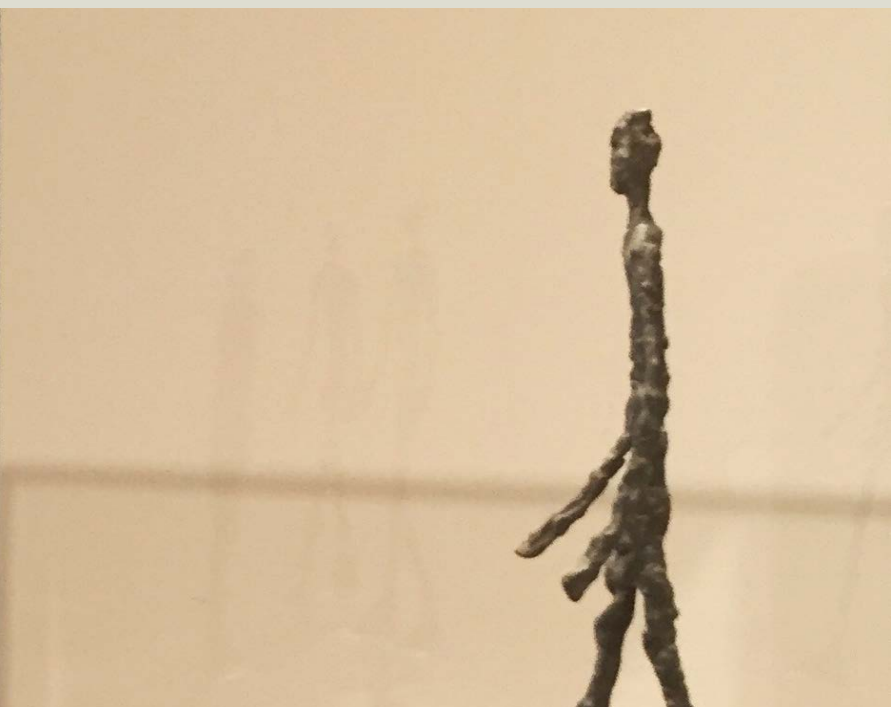
the one to take charge of a conversation. That was always something his wife took care of.

This case seems to have entered a dead end. They can't find Michael. And Owen did not have time to commit the crime.

"We must be miss something." Osborne feels something wrong and speaks to himself. He knows the feeling of losing a wife.

What if there is no man called Michael at all? Osborne thinks.

And then, he goes to Owen's house alone. He finds a hidden door in the bedroom and smashed it. In the corner of this dark room, he finds a few large clothes which don't match Owen. There are also many shoe lifts. Then, Osborne receives a call from Edward, who says, "The staff of the hospital said Owen had gone to the toilet for a long time at ten. It is Owen who killed his own wife because he couldn't stand the curse of his wife anymore. He disguised himself with clothes and copied fingerprints from others to confuse the police."





# *Ice in the Fire*

Tess SUN

---

My name is Bill for the moment. I am super clever. I know everything and I can control everything. Don't laugh! A+ is the only grade I had ever got. And I had been enjoying my new life as Bill for one year until a girl who has a silly name---Lily--- burst into my life.



Photograph from Ziyu Ke, Xiamen, Mar., 2019

# 1

Her chest was weaving, and she said, “I am so sorry for late, sir. I guess you must be Mr. Smith.”

Oh, my! Silly girl dates with silly Smith. I looked at her out of the corner of my eyes, “Apologies, I am not Mr. Smith. My name is Bill. B-I-L-L, Bill, the smart one.”

She said, “Sorry, Bill. Oh, excuse me. Can I call you Bill? Uh, is this seat taken? Or can I sit here for a while? I am exhausted. Since there are no more seats in the café, as I notice.”

Normally, I would refuse such a request from a stranger, but this time I agreed for no reason. Maybe it was because she had a nice voice.

The moment she sat on the sofa next to me, she started to talk to me nonstop.

“Why do you have a long hair?”

“How old are you?”

“What are your hobbies?”

“Are you an artist?”

I was submerged in her voice and start-

ed to stare at her face. She was kind of just a little bit pretty. Good features but short. Beautiful eyes but fat face. Juicy mouth but yellow teeth. But, well, overall, she was uniquely pretty.

“I am 20 years old. I am jobless recently...” I replied.

“Oh, really? Actually, I am waiting for my customer named Smith. I am working a part time job.”

...

In her babbling 20 minutes’ talk, I had already known everything about her. 20 years old, single, not a lesbian. She majored in English education in an unknown university. And she loved reading detective novels.

Even I could deduce that this Mr. Smith would not come. Still remember that? I can know and control everything.

“Bill, you are so funny. We are friends now, right?” She seemed very happy.

Before she left, we exchanged our num-

bers, she said: "Got your number. I'll text you later."

Yes, I am humorous, which is technically right. But wait, no girls had ever said they are going to text me. How dare you, silly girl!

In fact, this is my first time to talk with such a cute girl. In the past, just some stupid girls asked me some stupid math questions.

When I wanted to say goodbye to her, the door had closed, she left.

## 2

For the whole week, I have used ALL my psychology knowledge to analyse why she didn't text me from Project Effect to Murphy's Law. I figure out there were 7,485 reasons why she didn't text me. But I deny all of them. I just can't get rid of her from my head. Also, this is the first time that I can't control things.

Suddenly, bunch of "zeec" sounds come from my phone. It is LILY's message!

"Hi Bill, I am Lily. Do u still remember me?"

Sorry to text you late. I became awfully busy these days

"R u free this Saturday? I want to invite you to

a chill out dinner with my friends."

"Wanna come?"

My heart beats so fast like the volcano which is about to burst out. But why am I so happy for these little messages? Hold on, now I have to figure out the most appropriate way to reply to the messages.

After one hour, I text a "Sure" to her.

## 3

Saturday comes finally. For this dinner, I prepared a bunch of interesting topics.

But when I get there, there are not even friends. There is just ONE friend, Penny.

The chat goes really well.

"A foreigner came to America. He found a rat in his room, but he doesn't know how to express it in English. Then, he called the worker in the reception, 'Hi, do you know Tom and Jerry?' Then, the worker replied, 'Yes.' 'Jerry is here!' " They are laughing out loud because of my joke.

Just google "the weirdest things" online, then you can make these girls laugh. Suddenly, Penny gets an emer-

gent message and then leaves.

Lily says, "Have you ever heard about that Berkeley student named Jacky who killed his mother last year?"

I freeze for a second, "Nope."

"I know it is not good and moral to kill his mom. But if we see him from another side, his modus operandi is PERFECT!" She looks excited, nobody but a lover can tell she is talking about a killer.

"Oh? What happened?"

"He is intelligent and won countless prizes. Also, all his families, friends, and teachers can't believe he killed his mom because he looked good to his mother. Last May, he secretly prepared a lot of tools like operation scissors, cotton cloth, and tapes. He looked like a doctor, but his major is math. He is extremely professional."

I take up my coffee.

"After his mother was killed, she was wrapped in the bed with more than one hundred layers' cotton cloth, and every layer has activated carbon in order to prevent the rotten scent from spreading. It is careful and precise, isn't it?"

I nod because it is truth.

"Then, he told his family he and his mother were

going to Cambridge University for exchange for four years. He borrowed 200,000 dollars from relatives.”

She takes up a cup of black tea. “Interesting.” I say.

She continues, “Also, he pretended his mother to send a letter of resignation to her company in June. No one found any loopholes. Can you believe that he still went to school after he committed the crime? Haha, you must be curious why I know so many details.”

I nod again.

“In this year’s February, he texted and asked his uncle to pick them up at the airport. Obviously, his uncle didn’t find any of them. So, he went to the police station and after a couple of days, they finally found her body.” She says.

In order to engage in her brilliant “speech”, I ask, “So did he get caught?”

She shakes her head, “How can a perfect man be caught? I guess he just wanted to make fun of the police.”

Yes, absolutely. I just wanted to show off to the cops.

“Do you admire him?”

“In some ways, YES! I mean I like his intelligence. I can feel everything is under his control, isn’t it?”

I am very satisfied with her answer. Her speculation is completely on the right track. I guess this is the destiny.

“Sometimes I just think you are similar to him in some way. You two are both very smart and serious.”

I smile.

## 4

After that day, her cuteness, her passion, her braveness, her pretty baby face, emerge in my head over and over again. I guess this is what people would call a “crush” in a love story. Why would a scientific guy know the term in love story? One day I went to library to find a science book named Control, but I wrongly picked a love story book sharing the same name. Then I found love story was not that bad. Oh, what the hell am I doing here? This is not even important.

I start to google for some answers.

“How can a foolish girl crush on a smart guy?”

“Is it possible for a smart guy to be in love?”

The answers suck. I can’t find the perfect one until

I find a suggestion which is that you should take her to the theatre. I choose a horror movie, because Lily will be scared and hold my hands portraying me into a strong and handsome man in her mind. She will deeply fall in love with me, this is the theory in suspension bridge effect.

Then, I text her.

She replies, “Yes.”

## 5

Oh, my god! She is extra charming today. An elegant one-piece dress, cute high heels, long eye lashes.

“Hi, Bill. You look really nice today.” Don’t praise me, Lily. I can’t breathe now.

“Th...Thank you. You are pretty, too.” No, pretty is not enough. You are a goddess. Smelling the fragrance spreading from her hair, I walk with her into the cinema with my heart beating faster and faster.

In the movie, a ghost was going to scare the main character Jim, but he accidentally missed. Suddenly, she looks at me. I look back. Is she a delicate doll? Why does she look so unreal in the movie



Photograph from Jincheng Yan, Sri Lanka, Jan., 2019

light? She is smiling.

Oh, wait! According to what I've learned from the love story, smile means she wants to kiss me! Shit! I haven't practiced it with others yet. No, no, how can I practice with others? I can only kiss Lily. Oh calm down, calm down, Bill. You have watched Art of Kissing 20 times on YouTube. Just put your tongue inside, and stir expertly.

Her head is closer and closer. But I am still not ready. I am afraid I can't control it.

"Open your mouth!"

"That moment was super cool!"

Mixed with the sound of the dialogues from the movie, she and I speak at the same time.

"What? Open my mouth?" She laughs.

"Nothing. Just watch the movie." I try to act naturally.

I can feel my shameless from my head to my toe. I thought she would kiss me. The author of the love story is totally a liar!

## 6

After we finish the movie, we go to Koji Kitchen for our lunch.

Lily holds my hands walking towards the corner seats. She says, "Bill, today's sun is too bright. Can we sit here?"

"Sure. I love corners!" Why is she staring at me? Is there something wrong in my face?

"Can I talk with you for a while?" "Can I talk with



you for a while?" She and I speak at the same time, again.

"Lady first."

When I turn my head to her side, what I can see is her sparkling eyes and zoom in face. Just a second, I feel a soft and dewy unrecognized object on my lip. What, she kisses me?! My body is becoming stiff, but my heart beats so fast that I nearly faint. Damn it! I forgot to open my mouth and stir our tongues. I must be the worst kisser ever!

She smiles sweetly, "Bill, can I be your girlfriend?"

Why does she say my words first? This is what I supposed to say later. How should I reply according to the instructions in the love stories?

"Bill?"

I am shocked by her sudden voice, and respond unconsciously, "Yes, you can."

## 7

This is the best year in my life. We have been the happiest couple for a year, everything was PERFECT until one day she comes back home.

"Bill! It's enough, I am done with your control! I have told you many times about it. You never listen to me, and you don't even try to make it right! I am not your private stuff. I belong to myself. You can't govern what my goals are, what I like, and what I want!"

"Lily, listen to me." I hold her shoulder, trying to calm her down. I want to explain, but I can't even say a word.

"What? Are you mute?"

"No, babe. I ...I ..."

"Then tell me, say it."

I hold a deep breath. This is my first time to tell oth-

ers my inner voice. "Do you remember I haven't told you anything about my family? My mother was addicted to control me because she liked vanity. When I was young, I had to do calculation constantly and endlessly. Calculating math, physics, biology... Cold numbers and my mother was everything in my past life. Piece by piece, I unconsciously became crazy in controlling because of her. Now, I don't even realise I like to control."

"Your mother? Then take me to see your mother to see if you are right."

No, I cannot tell her the truth. She must be scared of me. I don't want my lover to think I am a cruel killer.

An invisible rock gets stuck in my throat, stopping me to tell her the truth. I lose my tongue, temporally.

"Or maybe it is just your lie. You, a liar! We are done!" She leaves.

My silly Lily, this is not my control. What I want is to help you to be a better woman. I admit maybe I was a paranoia in the past. But the moment I saw you, I had already known you are the only thing that I can't control in my life. After I met you, what I want to do is to create another utopia world for us and bury the past. But now you start to

ask me the past. What should I do?

8

Without her, I spent the darkest time in my life for two years. In the past, I thought I would have a lot of girlfriends, and it did not matter breaking up with Lily. But I just keep dreaming of her, which makes me miss her smiles, her hair, her silly cute things, her everything. But she is such a simple and beautiful girl. Dating with me must be the biggest spot in her life.

Today, when I am eating a bowl of tasteless noodles, a stranger recognizes me, and I get caught by cops. I barely feel anything, since Lily's left, I have become a zombie already.

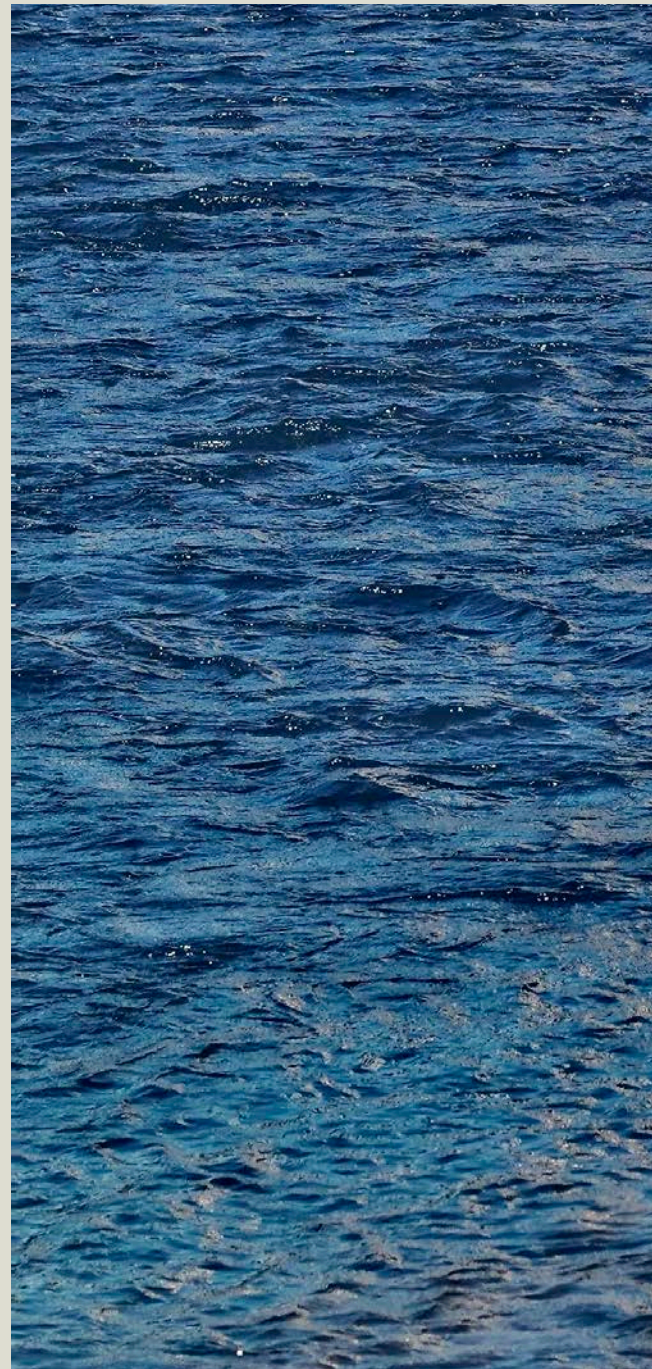
Lily, this must be the last time I appear in your life. I just hope it won't disturb your calm and happy life. I love you.

9

"Yesterday, the smartest killer Jacky has been caught. This time, he went to the police station voluntarily. Is it his trap...?" The woman's voice from TV starts to vanish from Lily's ears.

"No... No! This is not Bill. Bill has long hair and glasses. This must be Bill's twin brother. This must be his twin brother..."

"Why would you do that, Bill? I can keep it a secret for you..." Lily mumbles and



trembles in her room. Leaning on the wall corner, she sits down on the ground. With her head covered by her slender arms, tears run down her cheeks.

"He is ice, and I am fire. Ice will disappear eventually."



Photograph from Mingsong Yang, Eastern Europe, Jul., 2019

#### Disclaimer

This story's plot is purely fictional and in no way is it  
a reflection of real-life events.



Photograph from Sam Song, Jiangxi, Nov., 2017

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# *Field*

Lily LIN

Feng sits on the bus, which is rusted on the outside and full of nauseous gas smell on the inside. He sits on a seat that is covered with sweat stained blocky artificial leather and smells of weird drinks. Feng used to frown and twitch his nose unconsciously, but today, it seems that he doesn't notice these things. His mind runs so far away that he loses the sense of the outside world around him. Like a straw man that carries a heavy stone in his arms, Feng can't carry the weighty secret in his head any longer.

The outside wind that pours into the opened window refreshes his head and calms him down. He imagines many versions of his

parents' reaction when he tells them he is about to marry a city girl at the end of this month. He does not know why he would hesitate to tell his parents, maybe because the men in the village all marry girls in the same village or from the neighboring villages. He is afraid his parents will be against his choice. However, whether they agree or not, he decides to tell them today, no more delay. He takes the decision, and a floating balloon finally replaces the heavy stone held in his hand. He feels steadfast.

The ticket seller stands at the head of the bus, shouts, "Arriving at Dong Town, who should get off, get off."

Feng stands up quickly. He never thinks the distance between the city and his hometown is short, but today

the trip is just long enough for him to make a decision. He exits the bus slowly, under the sharp eyes and urges from the ticket seller. When his feet touch the road, he is surrounded by a flock of motorcycles. Every driver asks, "Where are you going?" "Get on" "...". The messy sound makes his head a mess. He picks the nearest motorcycle and gets on.

On the way home, the hot wind rushes through his hair and hits him on the face. But the pain makes him feel peace. They are a family, so they must understand him. He will make a compromise on the issue of letting them move to city to live with him. They will agree.

The closer his home is, the less thoughts he has.

When he arrives at home and sees Wen and Po

are pulling the dense wood cart, he hangs on to his smile as usual and runs to help them. Po is so happy that her smile is seen up to her eyebrows. Her smile occupies her whole face.

"You come back so early today," she comes closer to Feng. "You look a bit thinner, have you eaten your breakfast everyday..."

Mom's care is always so much, Feng thinks.

"I am fine," he answers and tries to change the topic. "These peanuts are growing so well, which field?"

"The field closest to the lake. These peanuts are the best so far." Po says.

Wen is a little surprised. He knows Feng does not approve of peanuts farming. Every time his son sees the peanuts, Feng will put on

his poker face. But today he looks different; he even asks about the harvest on his own initiative.

He puts down the wood cart, and wipes the sweat off of his face and neck with his clothes. Wen hears Po's nag, and glances at Feng's impatient face. He pulls out a cigarette from his pocket. Po is still talking about the harvest.

Wen stops her words, "Cook lunch. It is not too early."

"Yes, yes, it is not early," Po claps her head. "I prepared all of the food that you like."

She looks at Feng, like a child takes pride in what she

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has drawn. Feng smiles, but says nothing. This is normal to him. Every time he comes back, Po will prepare the food he likes since he gets into the college. He has gotten accustomed to it.

Wen frowns, and lights a cigarette.

"Why are you still standing here? Get into the house." Wen says.

He is not an out-going man. Even to his son, he does not express his love openly.

Feng also knows him. He follows Wen, and says, "don't smoke too much, it is not healthy."

"I know," Wen exhales the smoke. "Then, how is your work going on?"

"Well, I may have an opportunity to get a promotion," with a serious tone. "You know, I worked hard in this company for several years, so this time it may be me."

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Wen looks at Feng, and he can see Feng says he "may" get the promotion, but his proud eyes and rising mouth says the promotion must be his. Wen sits down, and shakes off the ashes. He thinks he can't teach Feng anything, because Feng is an adult. And even if he does say something, Feng won't listen to his old uneducated farmer father. So after Feng's words are spoken, he just uses his nose to pronounce, "En."

Though it is hot and the noise of the pots and pans from kitchen comes into the dining room, Wen and Feng, the father and son, seem to cool down. They remain silent, sit on opposite sides of the table.

Po brings a plate of peanuts, "Try some." She pushes the plate toward Feng, "These peanuts are new. They taste very good. You try some and lunch will be ready soon." Then Po hurries back to the kitchen.

"Last time you asked us to move to the city, and I know you are a filial son, you want your mother and me to live a better life, I know," Wen puts down his hand which holds the cigarette, and keeps silent for a while. "And I know last time, my words may be harsh, but you need to know your mother and I are used to our life here. This small village

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has our friends and relatives... you may understand..."

"I know, and it's your choice," Feng said. He thinks it is rare that Wen would say this to him, but it also warms him. They are a family; they will understand him like he understands them.

Wen looks at him, and is surprised that Feng could be persuaded so easily. The room gets back to silence.

"Here comes lunch." Po's voice breaks the tension filled atmosphere.

Po sits next to Wen. She always puts the food on Feng's plate, "in the city, the

food can't be so good. Here, this is your favorite shrimp..."

Feng eats the shrimp, and says, "This is too much for me, you should eat more." Then he gives one shrimp to Wen and one to Po. He sees Po smile and Wen mollifies his face. He believes it is a good time to tell them.

But before he opens his mouth, Po asks, "Feng, is there any good girl you like? If not, you know, our village has many good girls. Although our village is a little small, there are many good local girls. I tell you a few days ago..."

"Mom, I also want to

tell you something today." He stops Po's words, and tries to use a normal tone. "I met a good girl in the city," he looks at Wen, "she and I are going to the same university."

Po is so happy. Her son has a girlfriend which means her grandson is not far away. "It must be a very nice girl. When are you going to bring her back?" She turns her head to Wen and turns back, "to introduce us. We want to meet her."

"Very soon, at the end of this month. The wedding ceremony will be held in the city at the end of this month."

Photograph from Yinghuai Lyu, Zhuhai, Oct., 2019



Just after his words are spoken, Wen and Po put down their chopsticks. Po's smile is gone, and Wen looks at Feng with a scowl. Wen tries to control his anger. He asks, "Wedding ceremony?"

"Yes, this is the reason why I came home today." Feng answers.

"Ah," Wen twitches his mouth. "Good." He picks up his chopsticks, but does not move. He asks, "University students? Why didn't you bring her home?"

"She does not like the countryside very much."

"Why didn't you tell us?"

"I am telling you right now."

Wen stops. From Feng's words he knows his son does not comply them.

Feng is unhappy. Feng stands up. He thinks he does a lot to please his parents, especially Wen, from childhood to now, but they are never satisfied. A volcano bursts from his heart



Source: <https://www.pixabay.com>

to his head, and he shouts, “Good? What do you mean by good? Why are you unsatisfied? Say it.”

Wen does not say a word.

“Every time I... I ask you to move to the city to live with me, you say you like staying in this small village to plant those stupid peanuts, and I made the compromise. As I was a child, you did this too. I like playing basketball, and you make me study the whole day at home; I



wake up at four o'clock to pull up the peanuts with you, I do all you want me to do. Just this time, I choose a city girl to marry, and I love her. Why? Why you act like this? Can you respect my choice?”

“Respect?” Wen laughs. “You never brought the girl home. You never mentioned

anything about her...until today. And, today you tell us that you are going to marry her?” Wen throws the chopsticks and stands up. “You do not respect me, why should I give you my respect then?” He draws out a cigarette, holds it in his hand, and walks outside.

Po tries to calm Feng down, “Eat your lunch; we should talk about this after lunch.”

However, it does not work. Feng follows Wen outside.

“No matter whether you agree or not, I have already decided.” Feng shouts.

“You think I am too overbearing, so you do not need to listen to me,” Wen lights the cigarette, quiets for a moment, and points to Feng. “Now you grow up. You can decide your life without asking us, and you do not need to bother with me. You should go now.”

“Go? Leave? ”

“Yes, leave this place if you can't stand it.”

“Well...well. Go, I will go right now.” Feng takes his bag and prepares to leave.

Po looks at Wen. Then Po looks at Feng. She wants to stop Feng but she can't produce a sound.

Finally, she goes to Wen and asks, “Why did you talk about those things?”

Wen sits on the threshold with head down and holds his cigarette. How can he tell his son that he wants Feng to be a steadfast man under the hard work in the field? How can he tell his son that his father is useless? And his only use is to be serious with his son. He inhales the cigarette, but chokes.

# *Letters, Twitter and Ultimate Cyborgs*

George QIN

In the central region of the Galaxy that about 25,000 light-years from the Earth, the background of the universe likes an endless dark curtain. Once upon a time, there was an outline of a bright silver light spot became clearer and clearer in the darkness of life's forbidden zone in a flash. Soon after, the appearance of light spots became obvious. It is an extremely large standard octahedron, with a side length of 50,000 kilometers. Its surface is made of smooth metallic materials. In the limited cognition of human beings, objects of this shape can never be produced naturally. It's not easy to



Photograph from Sam Song, Shenzhen , Mar., 2017

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tell whether it's a spaceship or naturally. It's not easy to tell whether it's a spaceship or a building floating in the universe just from its appearance.

The interior of octahedron is a huge and simple void. Its walls are covered with many lines like circuit boards. Dense lines cover every corner of the walls. It's unclear whether the lines are engraved on the walls or they make up the walls. In addition, this huge space is empty as the tomb of creature.

Suddenly, a transparent blue light spot appeared in the void and then flickered violently. Light spots appeared one after another in different positions. They were connected with each other through the energy beams. To use the analogy of things we are familiar with, these light spots and beams were connected like a spider web.

These lights do not belong to any natural phenomenon known or unknown to human beings. Because they are creatures. To be exact, they are the civilizations far more developed than human beings. In honor of the unknown, we call them with the names of the legendary gods around the world like Hades, Odin, Surya, Pan Gu ... The blue spots are called Zeus, which is a name of a god in Earth culture. In addition to the blue Zeus, there are other races with different colors such as lavender, dark blue, gold, red, and so on. They are undoubtedly living objects but they do not have a fixed form. They are not solid, liquid or gas. In the development of science and technology, these races have de-

veloped extreme cyborgs technology. It means that they don't need the body as the carrier of thinking. Only part of them retain the tradition of allowing the larvae to grow in the culture medium. When the juveniles become mature, they will also leave the young bodies and join the society of the adult and becoming the existence similar to gods or ghosts for human beings. Gods who are not bound by the bodies have the unimaginable communication ability of human beings. In the long-time process of evolution assisted by science technology, they can directly connect the thinking between two individuals and transmit information such as images and languages without obstacles. As for the materials for maintaining individual survival or building spaceships, they use their minds to control the fixed route of micro wormhole for transmission.

As you can see, they are in the highly centralized autocratic societies. The unhindered exchange of information has formed the utopian collectivist autocratic societies. Their materials are spread by fixed routes like the way in the societies of ants and bees. In the long process of evolution, the gods restrained individual emotion to a great extent. In the eyes of human beings, they are cold and heartless. However, to sail in the cruel universe, maybe this is the reason why the gods can survive for a long time.

In the center of the octahedron, the blue light spots began to converge. The brightness suddenly increased a lot. Soon, all parts of the space were shining with differ-

ent colors. The higher the brightness was, the more frequently the information was exchanged. Soon, almost all individuals were connected, and information was shared in the minds of all individuals.

“Let’s open the Universe Court! This time, we will continue to discuss the Entropy Savior.”

It was Zeus civilization that transmitted information to all around. The Universe Court is held once in tens of thousands of years. According to the rules made by all of the civilizations, different races would take turns in the role of judges. This time it was Zeus’s turn. What they call the Entropy Savior is the plan of these high-level civilizations to save their universe.

The principle of the entropy increase is the ultimate proposition in the universe. The universe is irresistibly moving towards heat equilibrium, disorder and extinction. After a long time consumption, the universe of the gods’ civilizations has been fragmented. The most powerful civilization will inevitably be destroyed in the great extinction. Any life

is selfish. These civilizations formed by the high aggregation of individuals are like the whole huge organisms. There have been countless wars between them, and the consumption is immeasurable. Later, in order to avoid the extinction of the races, they extended their tentacles to the universes of other planes. Like hunters in the universe, they take the fixed stars in other universes as their own and change them into powerful energy sources. But seizing the fixed stars

means the destruction of the stellar system. If there was life in a stellar system, the end of life will come when the star is taken. The battle between the gods had caused great damages. In order to eliminate all the opportunities that cause new wars, the gods showed unprecedented value for life. The Universe Court was built under this background. Every tens of thousands of years, gods gather to judge the stellar systems in the distant universe one by one. If they believe that



there is not enough civilization level in the stellar system, the star will be taken away. And those unlucky creatures in that stellar system will end the consumption of cosmic resources in the form of death. On the contrary, if the gods find a highly civilized creature, the stellar system will be saved. And the next stellar system will be tested until the gods have enough energy to use for tens of thousands of years.

The Universe Court

targeted the location of the Orion Arm at 26,100 light-years from the center of the galaxy. That place is called solar system. Nine planets form a perfect balance with the sun. The Universe Court began to scan the planets from center to outside. The first planet doesn't have life. The second planet doesn't have life, either. The third planet...

"Life is found on the third planet!" The message was sent by Zeus, and it was

instantly communicated among all members.

"Civilization level test." The core of Zeus signaled the individuals responsible for observation.

"The third planet in the solar system is called the Earth in the language of its species. The species that built civilization called themselves human beings. The planet is covered with a thick atmosphere. More than 70% of its surface is ocean. The land where people live is divided into many pieces by the sea and other water systems. It is observed that human beings do not have the ability to survive in the seawater. As a result, individuals living on different lands are unable to make physical connection." Replied by the observers. This information was quickly displayed in the minds of all individuals.

A yellow light spot was shining. "No physical connection? What about thinking? How do they make the communication?" Asked by the civilization named Sphinx.

They are all independent individuals, and their thinking cannot be directly



Photograph from Baomu Song, Denmark , Aug., 2018



connected. They use an organ called vocal cord to vibrate the air to produce sounds when passing information to their peers.

However, the physical communication mode is greatly influenced by distance and environment. For most of the time, they use mechanical equipment such as radio to communicate. In terms of material, they use the tools called vehicles. But most of their vehicles can only be driven on the surface of ground and water. Their aircraft can't get out of the atmosphere."

"How about the speed of communication?" Surya asked.

"In human words, it's about five bytes a second." The observers transmitted some information to common mind.

In a few short conversations, the observers put all the information they observed into the information network jointly constructed by the gods. All civilizations began to process information quickly.

"What do you think of this planet?"

Zeus asked only a few seconds later.

"It's very weak but amazing. It's difficult to image such an inefficient way of communication and low level of connectivity can breed a civilization with a secondary understanding of electric energy." Said Hades with a purple light.

The bright red light as fire was flashing. "Too weak. It's too weak! Both information exchange and material exchange are inefficient. In this way, it will take thousands of years for human beings to break through the speed of light. I'm afraid that they will not be able to develop the technology of interstellar travel until the next Universe Court. There is no hope for such a civilization. We think we can take their fixed star away." Said Surtur.

Whether big or small, all civilizations expressed their ideas. Although only a few civilizations agreed to seize the sun, the vast majority believed that the Earth civilization is too weak. So, there were few gods wanted to give the Earth a chance for survival.

The debate in the network of their



Photograph from Jincheng Yan, Sri Lanka, Jan., 2019

thought connections stopped. Zeus decided to knock down the hammer of judgment and start the quantum black hole system of the Universe Court to capture the energy of the sun.

“Wait a minute.” A yellow light spot appeared in the corner of the court. It was one of the oldest civilizations which named Merodach. It was developed from the most primitive civilization through countless cruel experiences. In contrast, many of the gods’ civilizations actually developed at a super high speed under the influence of other super civilizations. Merodach is one of the few super advanced civilizations in the universe that has rich emotions. Unfortunately, the rich emotions in the universe are often identified as mental problems by the civilizations who abandon emotions. Only some of the ancient races with a small amount of emotions, such as Quetzalcoatl and Pan Gu have some understandings of Merodach. Most of the civilizations cannot understand their special performance.

“We can establish barrier free connection and communicate with each other. It is undeniable that this is a very important capability

in space navigation. But we can’t think that Earth humans’ way of life is wrong. I want to ask all of you a question now. How long have you not experienced the feeling of happiness?”

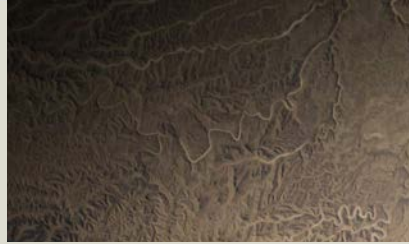
Long-time silence.

“Happiness is a very old word in the lexicon. It belongs to a kind of emotion. About 200 million years ago, our Izanagi civilization was rarely to mention it. Most of the emotions in our view are no different from mental illness. They are only allowed in a small number of cases.” Said a civilization.

“Yes. In the interstellar voyage of abandoning emotion, happiness is rarely mentioned. So, let me make an analogy. Do you remember the moment of Universe Court was adjourned last time?” Asked by Merodach with visible yellow light.

“That feeling is hard to describe. It’s probably a feeling of satisfaction. According described as happiness.

But the normal end of the Universe Court means that we have the right to live for



tens of thousands of years. This is absolutely good for any race. In this case, our happiness will not be considered a mental illness.” Zeus replied.

“You all pay too much attention to the technological level of the Earth civilization, but not the details of their lives. I don’t know whether you can understand that they can experience the happiness after communication which is extremely primitive to us.”

“No way. Happiness is one of the few states of thought that we accept. Only the continuation of life makes us realize the happiness. It’s impossible for a backward race to realize it easily without convenient communication technology and ability to connect with each other.” Some civilizations said coldly.

“But they did. Our communication, connection and daily life are so convenient that we haven’t experienced simple happiness for so long. There is a kind of physical communication between the Earth humans called letter writing. It is quite a primitive and inconvenient way. One person sends a letter, and another person may not read



the letter until days, months or even years later. But the recipient often gets more than a tiny amount of information. The yearning for distant relatives or friends and the happiness of confirming their health will come together. Our convenient life let us not easily realize the psychological state, such as happiness, satisfaction, joy and moving. In addition to communication, they connect the world in a primitive way. Although the process takes a long time, they can often get a lot of material convenience when they reach the goal. Sometimes their psychological state may not be inferior to what we feel when we get the energy for survival. They enjoy the feelings that are luxury for us in ways we can’t understand. As a higher civilization, we are not entitled to deprive them of their right to exist.” After Merodach finished, there was a long-time silence.

“Any other comments?” Zeus broke the



silence.

“Our Pan Gu civilization agrees that the Earth civilization is very helpful for our scientific research about the emotion feelings.”

“We don’t have time on lower organisms.”

“Our Venus simply think that it’s a pity to destroy a planet with civilization.”

...

At last, Zeus stopped the operation of quantum black hole. Observers at the Universe Court moved their eyes out of the solar system and continued to search for resources in the universe. Let’s try transposition. If we look at it from the perspective of selfish human value, the trial of the Universe Court on Earth stopped like a joke. It’s unbelievable that the civilizations



with absolute rationality as the leading role has given up the chance related to their survival just because of the emotion. For the gods, this may not be just respect for life. Maybe it's because they want to keep the Earth as a warning that the gods have sacrificed a lot for development.

The communication and connectivity ways of the Gods is far beyond the level of human beings. However, this does not mean that human beings do not need to consider the problems the gods encounter.

This happened in 1925, and now it is 2020. The trial was not only a glimpse of the universe, but an escape for the Earth. No one on the Earth knows about it. It is worth mentioning that, after nearly a hundred years, quite

a large number of people on the Earth no longer use letters for communication. Even the radio communication is not common. Mobile phones have become the mainstream. Twitter, Facebook, WeChat and other application programs have become many people's favorite ways of communication. The old trains and steamships were no longer the main vehicles connecting people from all over the world. The high-speed rails and airplanes replaced them. Finally, human beings are free from the constraints of the atmosphere and can even connect the Earth and the moon. However, although it is far less convenient than the civilization of gods, a similar situation has occurred to human beings. The level of communication and connectivity become much higher than before. People no longer have the fanatical expectation for communication. It has to be admitted that in the information age of convenient communication, the emotions

between people are weak.

Like the discussion of advanced civilization, no one can easily comment on the living way of a nation or even a race. Facing the fact of material convenience, no one can firmly believe that the life of communication through letters in the past is better than now. Whether people communicate with each other frequently and closely depends on everyone's heart.

In the boundless darkness of the universe, we don't know how many civilizations are doing research for communication and connectivity. Maybe some of them want to connect with the civilizations in their planet more closely, while some of them want to connect with the civilizations far away. No matter the way and purpose of communication and connectivity, each kind of them must have its own significance. The unique value of humans' communication and connectivity are based on the richness of emotions.



# Reviews & Play

# 4

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# The Same Moon

Chloe GONG

When will there be a bright moon?  
I hold the cup and ask the clear sky.  
I do not know what time of the year is  
In the palace of wonderland on this night.  
I want to ride the wind to flee,  
But be afraid of the magnificent palace in the moon and the tower of the fairyland,  
Which are too high to stand the coldness there.  
Stand up and dance, enjoying the clear shadow of mine in the moonlight,  
How can it compare with the Midgard?  
The moonlight turns the vermilion loft,  
And hangs low on the carved window,  
Shining on the sleepless self.  
If the moon has no resentment towards people,  
Why is it always round when people are far apart?  
A man will experience grief and joy, separation and reunion,  
The moon will suffer clouds and shine, waxing and waning,  
Such things have been difficult to be ideal since time immemorial.  
I wish a long life to us all,  
So as to share the beauty of graceful moonlight even though we are miles apart.

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This poem “Thinking of You” was written by Su Shi, a famous poet in the Song Dynasty of China. He was drunk on the Mid-Autumn Festival and wrote to his younger brother whom he hadn't seen in seven years. The Mid-Autumn Festival is a family reunion festival for Chinese, but it is difficult for Su Shi and his brother to meet each other for some personal reasons. Su Shi expressed his emotion to the moon, wondering if his younger brother was also watching the moon thousands of miles away. This bright moon is a connection

for people to express feelings. As a result, I couldn't help thinking of people thousands of miles away who shared the same moon with me in the previous years.

Going to college was the first time I left my parents and friends to live alone. It is really a thousand miles away from home, spanning almost the whole China from north to south. The first Mid-Autumn Festival after I left home made me really comprehend an ancient Chinese poem, “Alone in a foreign land is a stranger.” Walking on the road of an unfamiliar place,

loneliness rolled into my face with fear, and cruelly smashed a new label on me: stranger.

On that special Mid-Autumn Festival, I got together with a group of “strangers” who were as lonely as me, and then we became friends. We left home thousands of miles for collage study, and we couldn't go home and get together with our families. So, we had dinner together, and we sang drunkenly, frolicking and laughing on the way back to school. The last activity that day before we returned to the dormitory was to stand on the platform of the library and take a photo with the moon. Since then, we get together and find a place to take a picture with the moon every Mid-Autumn

Festival. Although, we no longer have very close relationships, because we are in different majors. We are busy with our studies and have met new friends. I can't say for sure what makes us stick to it, perhaps in memory of us who was lonely and left home for the first time in the past, but we got together to keep warm and comfort each other. The moon of the Mid-Autumn Festival every year is the connection, which connects us of the past, present and future.

Now we have adapted to college life and have met many bosom friends. Until today, I am still very grateful to everyone who was with me at that time. This is why we still keep the habit of taking photos with the moon during the Mid-Autumn Festival. Also, on that day, I made a video call in WeChat with a group of friends who have known each other for 10 years. After the call, one of the girls said, "Let's all take a picture of moon and send it to the group. At least, we are looking at the same moon." Immediately, the screen was swept by a dozen photos of moons from different angles and places. Although we were scattered all over the country, at that moment, I no longer felt lonely and scared, as if everyone was closely connected by the same moon. Even if we live far apart from each other, we are still shining in the same moonlight, warm and pure.

What I want to express is that for thousands of years, from ancient times to now, covering thousands of miles on the earth, the moon is the same. No matter how far or how long people are apart, the moon is a link that connects people's emotions and thoughts. It's not just the moon. Every flow must have its ebb; the affairs of the world are inconstant and ever-changing, but we can always find a connection point.



Source: <https://www.pixabay.com>

*Three Seconds:*

# A Hard-won Victory and A Revelation of 1970s' Soviet Society

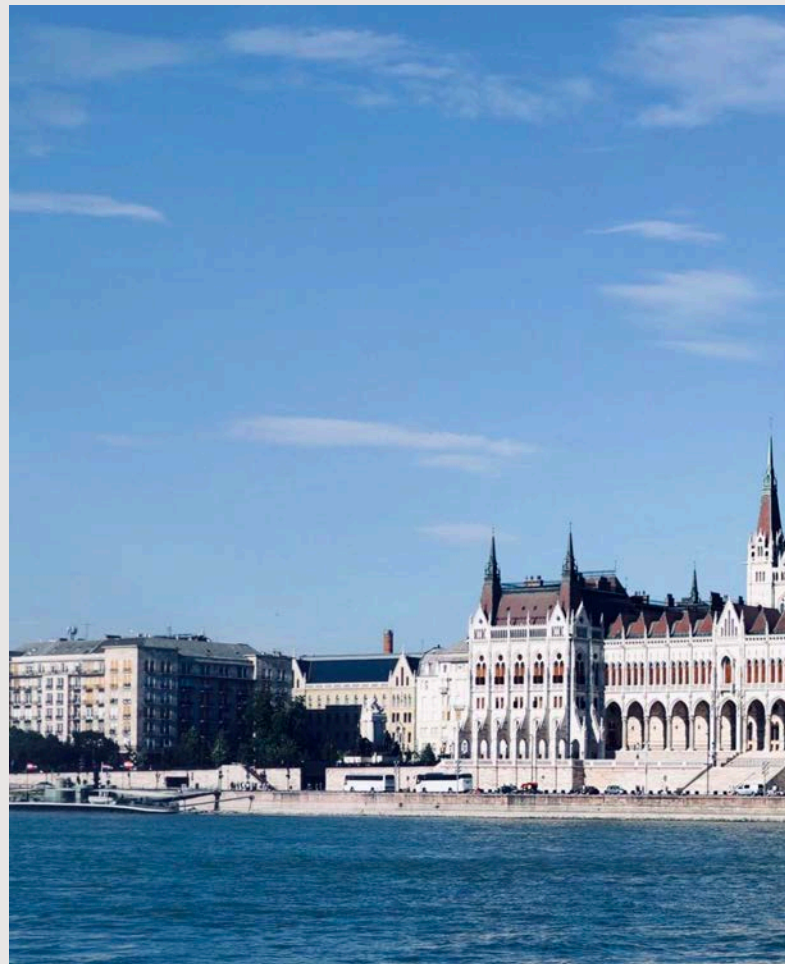
**Bosco YE**

I believe many people are familiar with the Nation Basketball Association in America. As the top domestic basketball tournament in the United States, NBA has a very high reputation all over the world. In recent years, the Olympic men's basketball games have all been won by Americans. However, in 1972, the invincible Americans suffered three seconds of darkness and was defeated by the Soviet Union basketball team. *Three Seconds*, a basketball movie directed by a Russian director Anton Evgenievich Megerdichev, tells the story of this unexpected victory of Soviet basketball players, while revealing the dark side of Soviet society.

The Soviet Union in the 1970s was a place with extreme political complexity. Political factors permeated Soviet Union's activities in almost every aspect. Before the 1972 Olympics, the former head coach of the Soviet Union basketball team was forced to leave the team for political reasons and was replaced by a tactically advanced and more dedicated head coach, Garland. As soon as he took office, he regrouped the men's basketball roster. At the same time, he also told the Soviet Sports Bureau that the team should seek for some more

advanced trainings abroad.

Garland's biggest challenge was to unite the entire Soviet team. As we all know, the Soviet Union was a "superpower" composed of

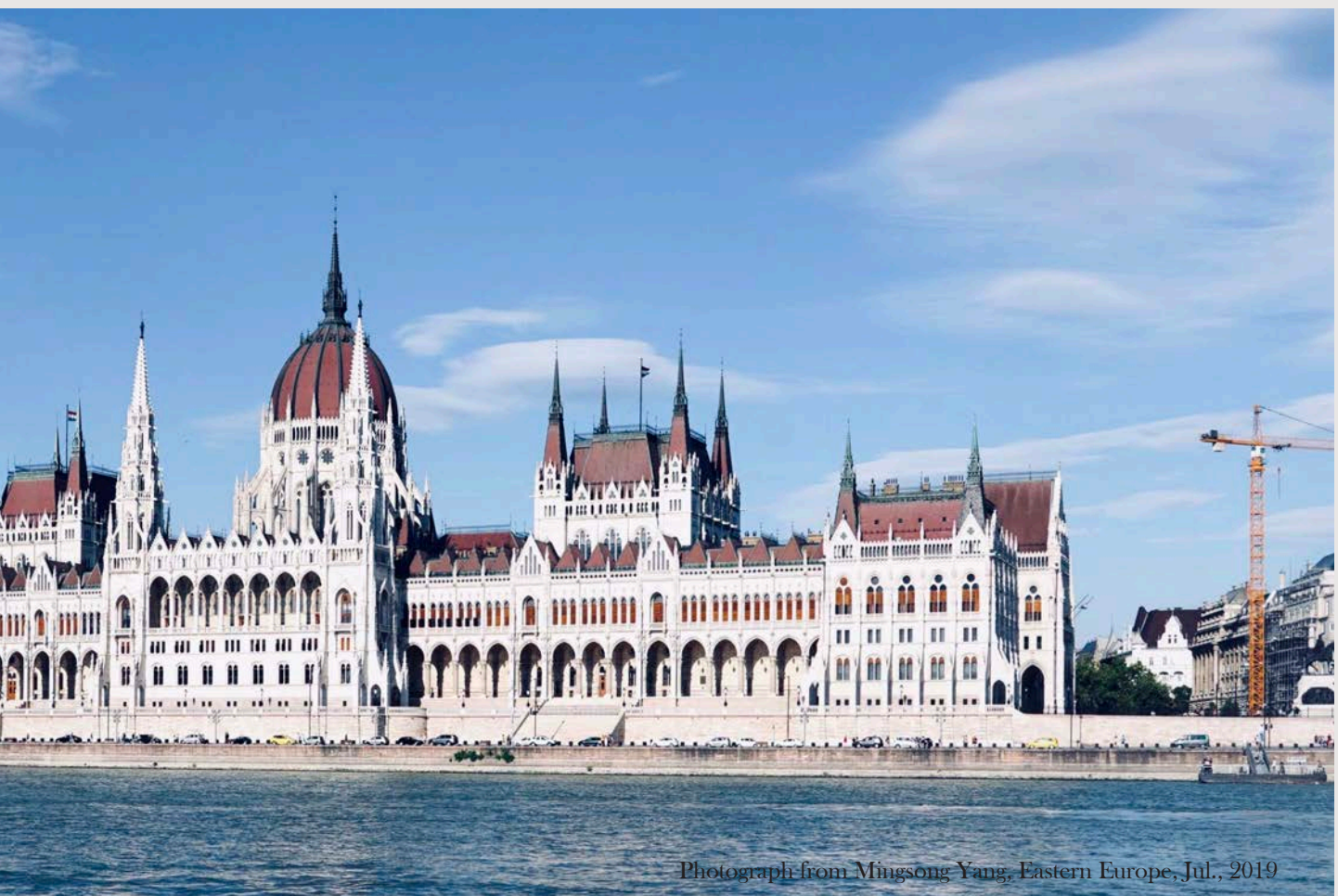


many different countries. Cultural differences could easily divide the team into different small groups, which might hinder their teamwork during a match. However, Garland managed to unite and improve the team with his high emotional quotient and excellent coaching skills. When a player on his team was injured, he covered the player's medical treatment fee with his own salary, even if his own son was waiting for an operation and needed a huge amount of money. When the sister of a Georgian player hosted a wedding, he took the entire team to celebrate, which was quite rare in the Soviet Union during the Cold War.

The climax of the movie is the final hit from the Soviet basketball team. However, shooting the scene of "final hit" requires superb shooting skills to appeal to the audience's emotions. For example, the director used

close-up shots many times, shooting muscle collisions, murderous eyes and dripping sweat. In order to present the last 3 seconds of the final match, the director used slow motion to deliberately lengthen the time, creating both "eternal" and "instant" confrontation and forming tension. Moreover, the director used "silence" to trigger "emotional imitation", a psychological mechanism, which makes the audiences hold their breath until the basketball enters the hoop. Finally, sound resumes and the audiences' emotions are released.

If you take a closer look at Three seconds, you will find that it hacks deeply into the political system of the former Soviet Union and reveals the dark side of Soviet society. During the 1960s and 1970s, the confrontation between the Soviet Union and the United States became increasingly fierce. In the early 1970s,



Photograph from Mingsong Yang, Eastern Europe, Jul., 2019

a large number of Soviet celebrities fled. Gomelski, the then assistant coach of the Soviet basketball team, became the focus of skepticism. Since the national team would inevitably play abroad, it was easy to escape. To prevent Gomelski from escaping, the Soviet Union simply removed him from the team. Although the Soviet Union during the Cold War was very powerful in some fields (such as aerospace), it was actually quite backward in many other fields. Many domestic materials were scarce and expensive because the government did not carry out foreign trade. In the movie, the Soviet basketball players who rarely went abroad carried many common items, such as wool, radio and belt, when they returned the Soviet Union and passed the customs. The dignified national players were like smugglers. Even when the star player Sergei Belov was suffering from a knee injury, he had to borrow painkillers from the United States basketball team because painkillers were not common in the Soviet Union. It was not easy for players to overcome injuries, and they also faced

the reward and punishment mechanism—"winning, low bonus; losing, black room". Outside of the competition, everyone had their own troubles, such as livelihood, family and love. Through these historical backgrounds, we can better understand the hardships of Garland, as well as the theme that this movie wants to express.

Although the success of *Three Seconds* relies on the indispensable failure of the American basketball team, it cannot be classified as a traditional inspirational film. The movie praises an attitude, that is, coaches and athletes of the Soviet Union, when facing the influence of political and institutional factors, still truly loved their collective, loved the sport of basketball, and were willing to give up everything to win the match that represented national honor.





Photograph from Sam Song,  
Tibet, Jul., 2019

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# Nostalgic Imagination:

## Poisonous Cure for the Sense of Loss

Lynn ZHANG

When encountering discontent and depression in the current situation, people tend to look forward to the future or backward to the past to seek for the dawning of hope or an exit from temporal disorder. This kind of escapist and longing sentiment engenders nostalgia. A nostalgic person often mourns for the lost days, believing that the absent in the present will be found in some corners of the past. However, the lost past people are yearning for is still full of unpredictability and uncertainty. It may be an imaginary site that never exists or can never go back, since nostalgia is also about the reconfiguration and recreation of the past with imagination and fantasy (Boym XIII). On the positive side, nostalgic imagination enables people to challenge the modern concept of time and spatial logic, to rediscover the possibility of continuity amid dislocation, and fulfill what is absent in the present. Nostalgic films became popular in Hong Kong after the 1980s. The nostalgic narrative and sentiment in the films temporarily relieve native citizen's anxiety and the sense of loss in the transient and shifting society (Chan 257). Such films offer an alternative for contemporary audience to travel in any direction of time and space, to reconstruct

the past with freedom and possibilities, and to redefine the tenuous identity. The ways of shifting the spatial logic and overcoming the power of time tend to change and even subvert how audience perceive and interpret the history and knowledge. However, the dual histories and memories produced by nostalgia are dangerous, making people fail to distinguish the actual home and the imaginary one (Boym XVI). The proliferation of nostalgia in contemporary Hong Kong culture provides an arena to interrogate that whether the timelessness longing and rewritten past can cure or exacerbate the displacement of the present reality. After investigating the violation of chronological time and mediated representation of the past in Stanley Kwan's *Rouge* (1987), I demonstrate that the disruption of the space-time continuum and fragmented montage of presenting history in nostalgic imagination hinders the audience's ability to retain their real history and produces a greater sense of loss as well as displacement.

The word "nostalgia" comes from ancient Greek, referring to an afflicted mood and a painful yearning to return home (Boym 3). It was first noted by a Swiss physician, Johannes Hofer, to diagnose the fatal symptoms experienced by spatially exiled Swiss mercenary





soldiers (Boym 3). The mania of longing for homeland results in a series of physical illness, such as loss of appetite and high fever, and this sentiment of loss is also connected with one's own fantasy. The patients usually present a great capability of remembering and replicating the images of their long-missing home in their mind (Boym 4). The recreated homeland produced by nostalgia can be an "illusive phantasm" and an erroneous representation constituted with fragmented and distorted images of the patients (Chan 261). Nostalgia in modern society has been extended beyond the medical fields to many new meanings related to time and space. For example, the homesickness has been institutionalized, and made connection with patriotism as well as nationalism for political purposes (15). By commemorating the historical glories and consoling the painful sufferings, national ideologies are able to be propagandized and rooted in people's mind. Therefore, the "past" has been given new meanings to transcend individual and collective memories.

In the Hong Kong context, the deployment of nostalgia focused more on its temporal dimension rather than the spatial one. In the 1980s and 1990s, the political transition, economic recession, and future uncertainties brought Hong Kong society a great sense of discontent and displacement (P. Y. Lee 3). From British colony to Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), Hong Kong people had been experiencing a difficult process of redefining and reconstructing their identities. The emergence of nostalgic cinema in the 1980s offered a new entrance for Hong Kong people to return to the past, to awaken the sense of social belonging and to search for the cultural root as well as continuity amid the threat of dislocation.

Nostalgic cinema of Hong Kong can be categorized into four main types, mainly

representing and reconstructing the 1930s', 1950s-1960s' Hong Kong history as well as social scenes and the ancient history of China (Chan 257). With the nostalgic imagination, the history is recreated and represented through the cinematic manifestations. Through recollecting the unique and representative images of the past, nostalgia cinema created an elliptical temporality and collective memories for the city. Fantasies about the past in cinematic nostalgia are ways of revising the history, and tend to tantalize us to build an emotional attachment to the lost time (P. Y. Lee 11). The intertextuality between the revision of the past and the present creative film texts reconfigured the old motifs with new interpretations and expressions. However, the cinematic nostalgia subversion of "time" figuratively alter how we experience and memorize the course of history. Moreover, as Chan indicates, nostalgia is not only about how the history is rewritten, but also focuses on how individuals retrospect the past, and invoke the memories (264). The nostalgic feeling is "a self-reflexive mode of history representation characterized by self-conscious theatricality" and a personal engagement with the past (P. Y. Lee 10). Representing the 1930's Hong Kong, Stanley Kwan's *Rouge* demonstrates how the memories of a certain past is transcended and mediated by individual and collective subjectivity.

Through the travel of the female protagonist, Ruhua, a courtesan died fifty-three years ago, fails to find her past lover, Chan, who promised to die with her, so she comes back to human world as a ghost to find him. As a former courtesan lived in the 1930s' Hong Kong, she finds herself helplessly lost in the unfamiliar cityscape of 1980s' Hong Kong in this return journey. Fortunately, she gets help from a young couple journalists (Mr. Yuan and Ms. Chu), who offer her temporary accommodation and help

her to publish the Notice for Missing Person. The sense of loss and displacement brought by the impersonal and irreversible changes of time and place are well presented in *Rouge*. The whole film is framed as a story within a story, and the history for modern audience is double mediated and refracted by Ruhua's nostalgic reminiscences and the two journalists' interpretations. When traveling the city, she feels frustrated about the changes in Shi Tang Zhu [Shek Tong Tsui]. The Tai Ping Theatre in the 1930s has been replaced by a Seven-Eleven convenience shop (00:29:56). The Yi Hong Lou, the brothel she used to live has become a kindergarten (00:35:35). The physical changes in the local landscape are pieced together to project a sense of displacement resulted by the contrast between the past glories of pleasure and the present alienated modern atmosphere. Moreover, not only the disappearance of old buildings, from dressing styles to behavioral manners, Ruhua is isolated and disconnected from the people of the 1980s. She used to be the most charming and elegant courtesan, and she sold her parts of body for male customers to caress: a client needs to pay 500HKD to caress her hand, and 1000HKD for her ears (00:26:36). Whereas, in the 1987, her extraordinary beauty and charm are not more attractive for the modern people. For example, when she intends to seduce Yuan to become her client for money in return, Yuan is indifferent with her words (00:27:05). After half a century, Ruhua had become an alien of the city.

The history narrated by Ruhua represents a rupture of temporal order and a mixture of individual subjectivity, consciousness and nostalgic memories. Imagination and characters' subjective states play a significant role in fabricating the past, and the past becomes a site of contending personal memories. Both the

couple journalists and the audiences read the refracted past through the narratives of Ruhua and the ways she pieced together the history, but there is one critical scene that Ruhua thinks she cannot find her lover because he has already died with her and has become a stray ghost lost in human world. Under this assumption, her lover still loves her as she does. However, when the journalists track Ruhua's oral past via external sources, they find a "fact" different from Ruhua's narrative. According to the 1934s' local newspaper, Ruhua's lover survived from hypnotics. Ruhua confesses her intention of killing Chan using hypnotics without noticing him in advance, which have not been mentioned before. The newspaper offers a different source of records about the past. Mr. Yuan and Ms. Chu then have different understandings of Ruhua's story. Yuan has shown more signs of compassion, but Chu regards her as a murderer. Ruhua's lover, Chan is alive, while living in poverty. She finally finds him, and returns back the rough locket that symbolizes their love, and feels disenchanted. Since the voice of Chan fading out from the movie, like Yuan and Chu, we cannot learn how he read his relationship as well as his past with Ruhua. Whereas, he did not spontaneously choose to die, and when he has accidentally survived, he is unwilling to die again to keep his promise to Ruhua. If Chan becomes the narrator of the whole story, he will have a different appropriation and reconfiguration about the past. The legendary past Ruhua longing for probably has been romanticized by herself. The charm of the past is determined by its freedom and possibilities, that is "a freedom to remember, to choose the narratives of the past" to unfold them in our own way (Boym 354). Therefore, it is difficult for us to have an authentic course to explicate the history, but the history comes to have meanings because of the



lived experience of the people. Nostalgic cinema also never aims to replicate an authentic history, but "to remark the past from the present time" and to give some foresight to the future (Chan 256).

In conclusion, nostalgic films tend to preserve the past by spatializing it, and revisit the past like visiting a site, while Ruhua's experience still reminds us of its irreversibility in reality. At the beginning of the film, Ruhua attempts to bring back her past lover, but she eventually fails to do so. "All have changed," as Yuan said after fifty-three years (00:34:48). The director doesn't attempt to romanticize the past, but maintains a distance from it. The nostalgic homeland Ruhua built for us is a past can never return to, even never exists. Boym indicates that "nostalgia can be both a social disease and a creative emotion, a poison and a cure" (354). The reconstructed past and homeland offer us possibilities and freedom to fulfill what is lack in present and what we want to foresee in the future. Whereas, being too addicted into it can also make us lost, since the imagined past is too attractive or even utopian, but never come to life. Furthermore, the disjunction between time and space and the altered nostalgic site also tend to destabilize how we memorize the history. We may fail to distinguish what is real, and what is unreal. Ruhua fails to keep a distance from the nostalgic past, then she finally suffers a greater sense of loss and pain. Without the authenticity and depth in history, nostalgic kitsch constructs the past with imagination mainly for public consumption. The politics of nostalgia has been an important part of popular culture production (Appardurai 30). The object of Hong Kong nostalgic films usually is to build "another land of exotic ambience" rather than the "original homeland" (Ng 10). The imaginary hyperspace of a utopian past may temporarily



alleviate the predicament in the actual present. However, only when we detach from the state of timelessness of the nostalgic imagination, and face the reality bravely, the real problems of the present can be solved, and the predicament in the actual present can be truly alleviated.



Source: <https://www.pexels.com>

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# *When I Become You*

Group Indigo

Molly KE

Zach LI

Ashlie LU

Iris CHEN

Carrie CHEN

## Characters:

Felix, the husband, dresses in white T-shirt

Vanessa, the wife, dresses casually

Linda, the domestic servant, dresses in an apron

Jenny, a woman actor who acts as the mistress

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## *Act 1*

The scene is laid at Felix and Vanessa's house.

*(In the living room of their apartment.)*

*(Light on, following the old Felix. Full Front.)*

Felix's monologue: My name is Felix. You may have not heard about me before. I am here to share with you a magical story of my wife and me. At that time, Vanessa and I had been married for two years. Both of us had stable jobs and we also had a love nest of our own. Life seemed to be happy. However, I was diagnosed with a cancer and at that time I thought I would die. So, I set a trap to let Vanessa leave me forever; she was young and I didn't want to be her burden. *(In the left stage.)*

*(Light off. Change the scene.)*

*(Light on.)*

Felix: *(Pfl, looks at his watch and says to the servant.)* I'll have a meeting at home later. You are free to leave earlier today. Before you go, prepare two glasses of wine.

Linda: Okay, Sir. *(Prepares the wine on the table and leaves.)* Things are ready. See you tomorrow, Sir.

*(Linda leaves the house. A few minutes later, Jenny comes in.)*

*(Change the scene.)*

Felix: I hope you have already known your role well. *(Places two wine glasses on the table in the living room.)*

Jenny: Don't worry. Just prepare the money.

Felix: OK, don't let the cat out of the bag. *(There are footsteps coming. Felix listens to the sound of key.)*

Felix: She's back! *(The door is open.)*

Vanessa: (*1/4R. Excitedly.*) I'm home, sweetie! (*Looks at the wine glasses and asks doubtfully.*) Is there a guest? (*Looses her ponytail.*)

(*Felix comes out of the bedroom hurriedly, followed by a woman in shirt.*)

Felix: I thought you are on a business trip. (*Calmly looks away.*) Why are you back so soon?

Vanessa: I sent you a message yesterday. Did you miss that?

Felix: (*Takes his phone out and scans for a second.*) Oh, you did. But you...

Vanessa: (*Interrupts Felix and says with an increased volume.*) Who is she? (*Points at the strange woman.*)

Jenny: (*Hands raised, coquettishly.*) Hi, Vanessa. I am Jenny! I always hear about you from Felix. (*Pretends to be generous.*)

Vanessa: (*Seriously.*) I didn't ask you! (*Stares at Felix. Talks loudly.*) Say something, Felix. Who is she?

Felix: (*Calmly.*) That's what you see... Well, you know... I don't want to hurt you...

Vanessa: (*Impatiently.*) No, no. That's ridiculous! Why? We've got married for only two years... (*Almost cries.*)

Jenny: (*Sneeringly.*) Maybe you should find the reasons of yourself.

Vanessa: (*Uncontrollably, shouts at Jenny.*) Shut up! You know nothing about us.

Felix: Jenny, don't.

Jenny: (*Rolls her eyes and crosses her arms.*) Well, shall I leave now?

Felix: You should have gone earlier. I'll talk to her.

(*Jenny slams the door and leaves.*)

Vanessa: (*Sits on the sofa, says weakly.*) Okay, just you and me now. You want to explain?

Felix: Alright. As you see, I apologize for my betrayal. I admit I did something wrong. But love cannot be controlled. Just like we loved each other at the beginning, I am so sorry that I fall in love with her. Umm... Well, divorce might be the best choice. (*Turns his face aside.*)

Vanessa: (*Stands up in surprise.*) Divorce? Have you been tired of me so soon? (*Turns depressed.*)

Felix: (*Turns his face against Vanessa, and pretends to be impatient.*) Y...yes! I don't love you anymore. I have had enough of you! Honestly, I can't breathe at home. Only when you are away can I feel free.

Vanessa: We have been married for just two years. Don't you feel guilty?

Felix: (*Firmly.*) Not at all. I told you just now. I don't love you anymore. Sorry, Vanessa.

Vanessa: (*Extremely sad.*) This can't be true. How could you... (*Covers her face and cries.*) OK... I compromise. I can change whatever you don't like. But I really love you. Don't leave. Stay, please? (*Grasps his arm and begs.*)

Felix: Vanessa, we are done. (*Pushes her away inexorably.*)

Vanessa: (*Collapses.*) You know what, Felix. You are my world. Now you don't love me, why would I stay? (*Throws her ring away and runs out.*)

Felix: Vanessa! (*Nervously, follows Vanessa.*)

(*Light off.*)

(*Light on.*)

Felix's monologue: (*FF*) At that moment, I could totally feel her despair. Guilt fills my heart. She'd gone as I wished, but I still followed her for her safety. (*In the left stage.*)

(*Light off.*)

(*Light on. Change the scene.*)

Felix: Stop! Don't be silly!

(*A car drives towards Vanessa.*)

(*Felix rushes up and pulls her backwards in a flash.*)

Vanessa (F): (*1/4R, gets up, rubs the shoulder, and looks at the woman in front amazedly.*) What? Why am I out of my body?

Felix (V): (*1/4R, gets up, and looks at the street.*) What...what happened? (*Looks at his body, in shock.*) Why does my voice sound like a woman? (*Touches his face and neck, recognizing the clothes.*) I am...Vanessa?

Vanessa (F): (*Walks to showcase and yells out.*) Oh my god! Why do I become Felix? Then... (*Turns towards Felix.*) Felix? Are you inside of me? (*Starts to be anxious.*) What...

Felix (V): Wait, wait. Calm down, Vanessa. We...

Vanessa (F): (*Vexed.*) We should call the policeman! No, no! They won't believe us. It's so absurd. (*Worriedly.*) what should we do?

Felix (V): Look, we are still on the street. We shouldn't draw others' attention, right? Let's go home first... (*Holds her arm.*)

Vanessa (F): What are you talking about? There is no such home for you and me!

Felix (V): Hey, calm down! Vanessa, please! Listen, you don't want to stay like this, either, right? Just go back with me, and we will find a way to fix everything, OK?

Vanessa (F): Fine, for my own good. (*PfR, walks away.*)

(*Curtain.*)

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## Act 2

The scene is laid at Felix and Vanessa's house.

*(Light on, following the old Felix. Full Front.)*

Felix's monologue: *(FF)* We didn't expect the body exchange, but if it was not the accident, we would be separated forever. Maybe it's God who gave us the opportunity to let us know each other again. We both were scared that night, so we went home first and decided to deal with it on the next day. *(In the left stage.)*

*(In the morning, Linda comes to Vanessa's house. She picks up the clothes from the sofa and were about to wash them. When she checks Felix's pocket, she finds a doctor's business card in it.)*

Linda: Oh! It must be an important doctor's business card for Sir. I have to give it to him.

*(Linda quickly walks to the bedroom and finds Vanessa (in Felix's body) applying a mask.)*

Linda: Umm...Sir, this is probably your business card. I found it in your pocket.

Vanessa(F): What? Oh. Let me have a look. *(Feels strange.)*

*(Linda walks to the restroom to wash the clothes and finds "Vanessa" with a razor in "her" hand and is about to shave.)*

Linda: *(Feels strange.)* Madam, I saw that Felix was applying a mask. Did you teach him to do so? Hahaha....

Felix (V): *(Realizes he is "Vanessa" now and hides the razor.)* Oh... *(Remains silent for a moment.)* Yes! I found that his skin was too bad these days, so I let him apply a mask.

Linda: You are so careful! Oh, yes, I will prepare breakfast right now, please come out and have it if you are ready!

*(Linda resists laughing and then leaves the restroom.)*

*(Light off. Change the scene.)*

*(Light on.)*

*(At the living room table.)*

Linda: Sir, madam, the breakfast is ready. *(In high voice.)*

*(Vanessa and Felix walks to the table and look at each other awkwardly.)*

*(Vanessa (F) has no appetite for breakfast.)*

Vanessa (F): *(1/2R)* Ugh. . . How can I eat breakfast in this condition? Felix! Think about ways to change our bodies back.

Felix (V): *(1/2L)* Shh. We can't let Linda know. Who wouldn't want to? Don't push me.

Vanessa (F): *(Pounds the table.)* Think about it quickly!

*(Linda finds Vanessa's suitcase while doing cleaning.)*

Linda: Madam, is this your suitcase? Let me help you put it back into the room. Would you mind me unpacking it for you?

Vanessa (F): Just put it back. I'll unpack it...

*(Linda looks confused.)*

Felix (V): *(Noticing something wrong, stands up and interrupts Vanessa.)* Ah... My business. I'll do it myself.



Linda:        Okay, madam. Oh, it's 11 o'clock. I should go and buy some ingredients. Excuse me, madam.

*(Felix (V) leaves the table without taking his cell phone and takes the suitcase to bedroom.)*

*(At this moment, Felix's phone buzzes with a sound. Vanessa (F) looks over the messages./The messages from Jenny: I had finished the act! I'll wait for you at the cafe. Bring me the money soon.)*

*(Vanessa (F) wonders why Felix should pay for the mistress.)*

Vanessa (F): *(FF)* Now that I'm Felix, why don't I take this opportunity to meet her and find out the secret?

*(Light off. Change the scene.)*

*(Light on.)*

*(In the Café.)*

*(Jenny sits in the Café, looking at her watch impatiently. Vanessa (F) walks into the café.)*

Jenny:        *(1/2R)* Why are you so late? Did you bring the money?

Vanessa (F): *(1/2L)* Why should I give you money?

Jenny:        Are you playing a joke? You hired me to act as your mistress and it's time for you to pay me.

Vanessa (F): You are an actress?

Jenny:        Sure! We have the contract. One thousand dollars.

Vanessa (F): Wait...Umm...Let me think about it.

Jenny:        You're gonna die soon. What are you waiting for?

Vanessa (F): Die? I'm going to die...You mean... Felix? So, he hired you to... Oh my god, unbelievable!

*(Vanessa (F) is shocked and runs out of the café.)*

Jenny:        Hey, Felix! What happened? you haven't given me the money yet!

*(Light off. Change the scene.)*

*(Light on.)*

*(At home.)*

Felix (V):    *(FF, puts away the staffs.)* Never think of doing this in her body. Quite weird. I have to find out how to change our bodies back quickly... *(Sighs)* But this might be the last time...

*(Felix (V) notices a beautiful notebook. He opens it and finds that it is Vanessa's diary.)*

Felix (V):    *(Reads out Vanessa's diary).*

***June. 11<sup>th</sup> 2017 / Sunny /Title: The Proposal***

*Today I got a load of work and was really tired. But when I got off work and went out of the building, I saw Felix waiting for me at the door with a bunch of red roses. He rushed towards me and gave me a big hug. Then, like a prince, he handed me the flowers and took me to the car. The day was coming...*

***June. 11<sup>th</sup> 2018 / Rainy /Title: A Little Disappointment***

*Today is our anniversary. He was very busy with his work and hadn't contacted me much. I looked at my phone and felt a little disappointed. At 6 pm, he told me that he would work overtime today and come home very late. I felt lonely because he forgot that today is our anniversary. I turned on the TV and waited for him in the living room but fell asleep on the sofa... Though I felt a little bit upset, I understand him. No matter how busy he will be in the future, I would understand him. Because I am his wife, who always loves him...*

***Oct. 2<sup>nd</sup> 2018 /Weather: Windy /Title: The Dinner***

*Felix can't eat spicy food, but today he cooked a dish of poached spicy beef for dinner. I heard him having a dry cough while he was cooking. I could feel Felix's love for me... The dish was very, very delicious; Felix watched me finishing it and smiled merrily. I was really touched. No matter what happens, I will stay by his side and take care of him. Felix is my everything and I will love him forever...*

*(Light off. Change the scene.)*

*(Light on.)*

*(At the moment, Vanessa (Felix) rushes in the house from outside.)*

Vanessa (F): Why didn't you tell me about your illness?

*(Hearing the voice, Felix (V) comes out.)*

Felix (V): My illness? How do you know that?

Vanessa (F): I met... I met Jenny just now. She said... you are going to die... *(Almost cries.)*

Felix (V): Not that severe. You don't need to worry.

Vanessa (F): Why are you still lying to me? We can get through it together.

*(Be silent for a while.)*

Felix (V):     *(Sighs.)* Well, the fact is... I don't want to get you involved and be your burden. I don't mean to hurt you... It's... It's Leukemia. The doctor said I have very little chances to be cured. So, I hired Jenny to act in front of you...

Vanessa (F): I never think that our love is so fragile... I really, really love you; you don't even know that... *(Cries.)*

Felix (V):     I know, Vanessa! I know that! Your diary told me everything... No, you have showed me how much you love me by yourself. Sorry, Vanessa! It must be much more harmful if I leave...I'm so sorry...

Vanessa (F): You intended to protect me. I understand. But we should neither leave each other one alone, nor give up. We are family. Felix, there is nothing that we can't go through together.

Felix (V):     You're right, Vanessa. I shouldn't leave you. I love you! Would you stay with me all along?

Vanessa (F): Of course!

*(They hug. Their souls return to their own bodies.)*

Felix:         Vanessa!

Vanessa:     Felix!

*(Linda comes back.)*

Linda:         *(Covers her mouth.)* Oops. Sorry, do I bother?

Felix:         Nope.

Vanessa:     As usual.

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*End*





Photograph from Ziyu Ke, Japan, Jun., 2019

ILMS

*Her*

*The Flu*

*Babel*

*Good Will Hunting*



RECOMMEN



USIC

*Talk*

**BOOKS**

*Night Work*

*How to Win Friends  
& Influence People*

*Crucial Conversation:  
Tools for Talking When Stakes Are High*



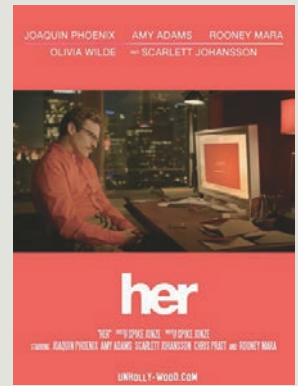
**DATIONS**



*Death Stranding*

**GAM**

# FILMS



## *Her*

**Country:** The United States

**Year:** 2013

**Recommended by** Maxwell YANG

*Her* is a movie directed by Spike Jonze, and explores an intimate relationship from the unique perspective of artificial intelligence. The film depicts a story of a lonely writer who develops an unlikely relationship with an operating system designed to meet his every need in a near future. The special relationship between the writer and his fictitious partner reveals an innovative way to communicate and connect with others through new technology, which makes us

reflect on our own way of socializing and interacting with the world. It is a good avenue for us, especially for people who are not good at forming close relationships with others in real life, to rethink the definition of interpersonal communication and connectivity.

## *The Flu*

**Country:** Korea

**Year:** 2013

**Recommended by** Izzy ZHAO

A group of Southeast Asian smugglers came to South Korea through difficulties and dangers, but almost all the smugglers in the whole container died, only one person dragged his weak body to freedom in downtown Seoul. It's not surprising that this person carries the deadly swine flu virus. In just one day, the virus quickly spreads all over the city. Many people are unconsciously infected, which leads the shadow of death to haunt the city. Before long, the swine



flu virus breaks out and spreads widely, and the once peaceful country faces an unprecedented disaster. We know that, biologically, pathogens spread from one organism to another. Yet, it is the interactions and communications between human beings in such a disaster that reflect the complexity and connectivity of human nature.

***Good Will Hunting***  
**Country: The United States**  
**Year: 1997**  
**Recommended by Kelsey ZHU**

The film tells the story of a cleaner at MIT called Will Hunting. Will has talent for mathematics, but comes from a depressed economic and social background. With the help of Professors Lambert, Professor Thorn and his friend Chuck, Will finally opens his mind, removes interpersonal barriers, and recovers a sense of self and love for another.

IQ is as important as EQ. The protagonist ignores his integration with the society and socializing with others, even if he is a genius, he is also feels inferior and unhappy. Fortunately, he makes some good friends and gets help from them, so that he can be a better person.



***Babel***  
**Country: The United States**  
**Year: 2006**  
**Recommended by Bosco YE**

Babel is a movie directed by Alejandro González Iñárritu, which aims to show the tragedies of people in several different countries, which occur due to poor communication. The film shows how, in the short period of 11 days, manifold unfortunate things in the world happened in four families from different countries, and each the misfortune is caused by poor communication. The director shows us the importance of communication through the circumstances of families in four different countries. For us, especially those who are not good at communication, this film underscores the importance of communication.

# BOOK REVIEW

*Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When Stakes Are High, Second Edition*  
By Kerry Patterson, Joseph Grenny, Ron McMillian and Al Switzel,  
The United States, 2012  
Recommended by Maxwell YANG



In *Crucial Conversations*, the authors dissect common blind spots in communication and provide several conversational, listening and acting skills, complemented by conversational situations and short stories, to help the readers master these skills in the quickest way. In this sort of guidebook, you might think of your previous experience by reading the true cases mentioned in it, like arguments caused by your careless words or conflicts with colleagues in workplace.

If you are done with the “dangerous conversations” you had before, try *Crucial Conversations*, and turn communication back into the bridge of connection and love between people.

## *Night Work*

**Original name:** *Die Arbeit der Nacht*

**By** Thomas Glavinic

**Austria, 2006**

**Recommended by** Esther Zeng



One day, an ordinary day, Jonas wakes up in the morning, and finds that he is the only one left in the world. There is nothing moving outside. Radio, TV, and the Internet are all down. No birds. No insects. Nothing. No one. Jonas is the last living being on the planet. Why? Why does everyone disappear? And why is he still here?

Night Work is full of thriller and mystery, but it is not a book about finding the truth. It is about what would happen to someone's psyche when he is put in an extreme situation—utterly isolated and alone in the world. There is no more right or wrong for Jonas. He can break into any house or shop to take whatever he wants. He can literally get everything in the world, except social interaction. There is nothing to do to give meaning to his life.

And there is no one to interact with to preserve his sanity as well as keep in touch with reality. Jonas starts to have hallucinations and paranoia, constantly hearing nonexistent sounds and seeing moving figures in the corner of his eye. Driven by increasing madness, Jonas throws himself from a tower finally to his death.

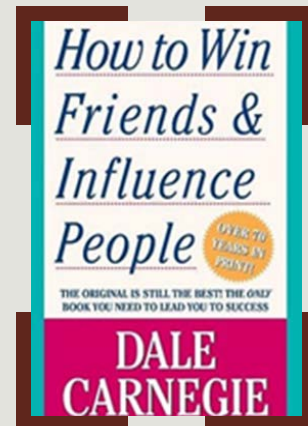
Night Work is a book which may make readers uneasy and uncomfortable—especially when they are reading alone—but it is also a book which can provide a unique perspective to look at communication and connection. From a book totally without any communication, we realize what communication means to someone's life. From none, we can see more.

## *How to Win Friends & Influence People*

**By** Dale Carnegie

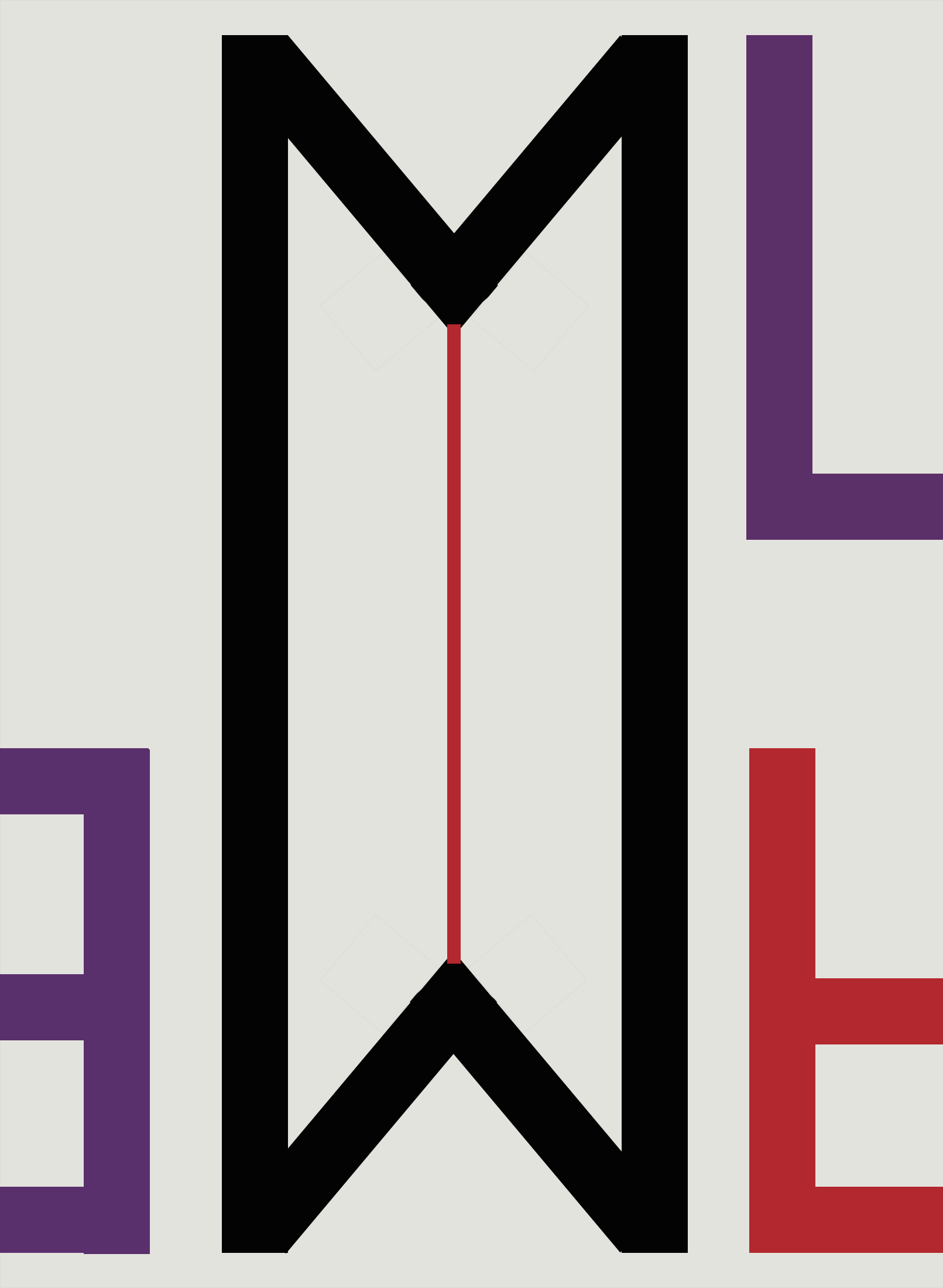
**The United States, 2015**

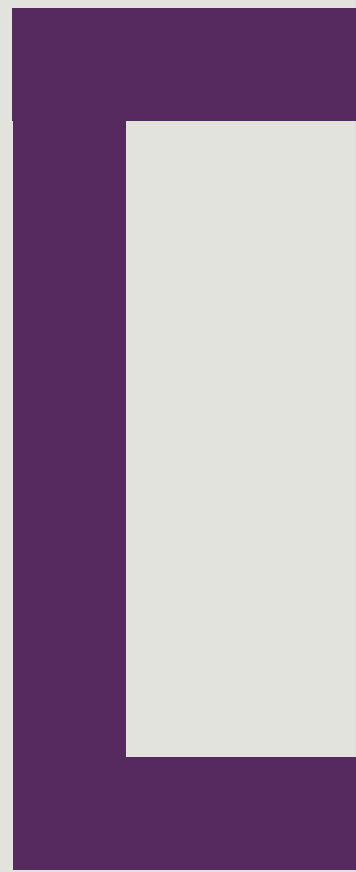
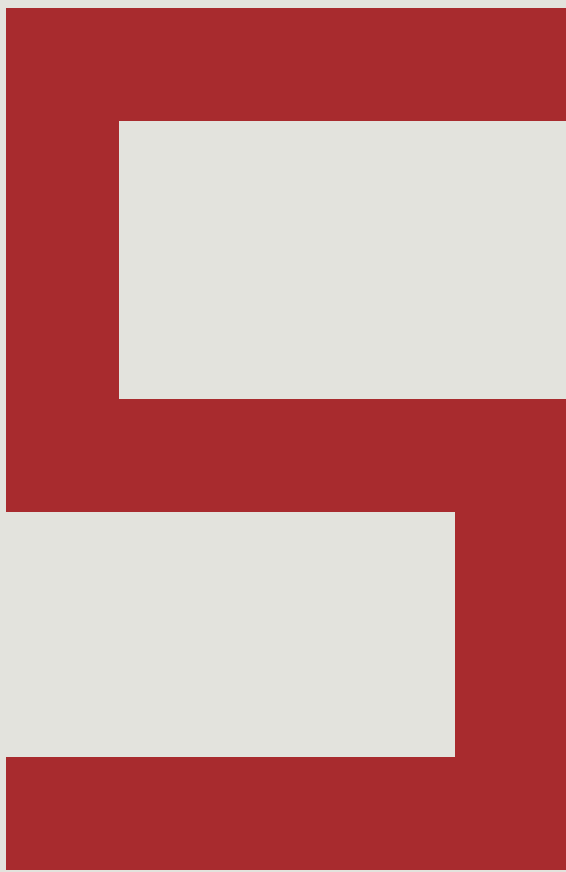
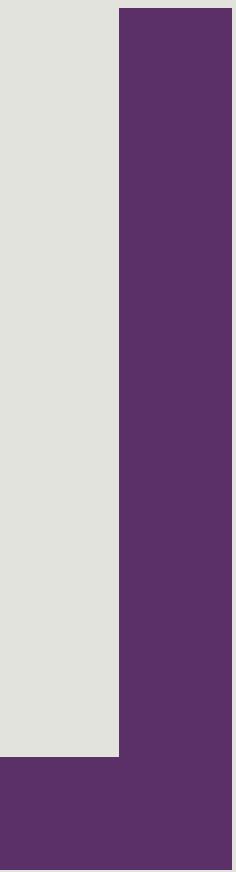
**Recommended by** Izzy ZHAO



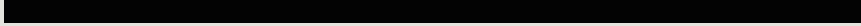
Since its initial publication eighty years ago, how to Win Friends & Influence People has sold over fifteen million copies worldwide. In his book, Carnegie explains that success comes from the ability to communicate effectively with others.

He provides relatable analogies and examples, and teaches you skills to make people want to be in your company, see things your way, and feel wonderful about it. For more than eighty years his advice has helped thousands of successful people in their business and personal lives.






MUSIC



GAME



The background of the image is a screenshot from the music video for the song "Talk" by Coldplay. It shows two figures, likely the band members, standing on a large, white, geometric structure that resembles a giant's foot or a piece of modern architecture. The scene is set against a dark, starry sky, suggesting a night or space theme. The figures are silhouetted against the lighter background of the structure and the sky. The overall mood is contemplative and artistic.

*"oh I wanna talk to you*

*you can take a picture of something you see*

*in the future where will I be?*

*you can climb a ladder up to the sun*

*or write a song nobody has sung*

*or do something that's never been done"*

Screenshot from the music video of "Talk", song of Coldplay, produced by EMI, 2005

# "TALK"

Recommended by Maxwell YANG

Coldplay

Year: 2005

Country: The United States

With these sincere words to the beloved late brother, the meaning of the particular action "talk" is no longer limited to spoken language, but covers more a lot, either tangible or intangible. A photo can be a way of talk, an unrealistic dream can be a way of talk, a manuscript of a lyric can be a way of talk. Communication can be done in numerous modes, and we can get a sense of connectivity by doing a lot of things other than using existing language systems. Never trap yourself into solidified thoughts that communication should be in certain fixed forms, it is a flexible item that interpreted differently by each person.

## *Death Stranding*

**An action game developed by Kojima Productions, 2019**

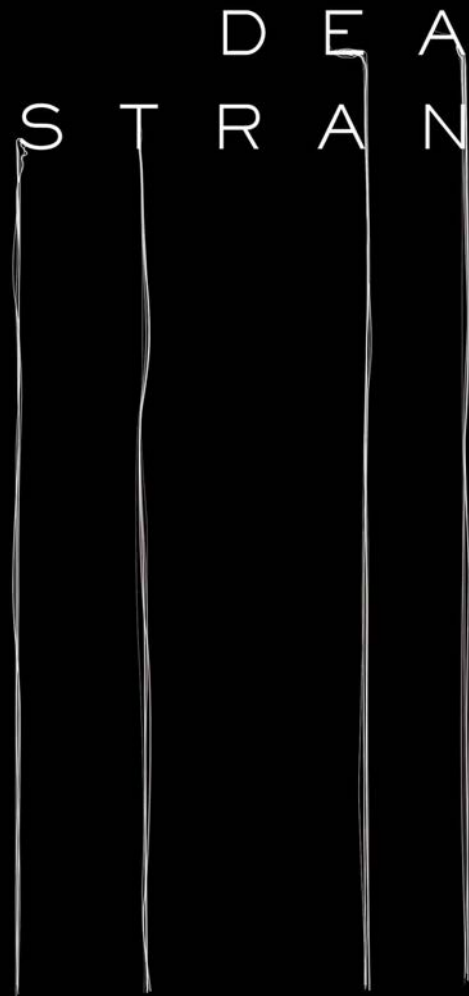
**Country: Japan**

**Recommended by Esther ZENG**

The game is set in an apocalyptic United States, where a cataclysmic event known as the "Death Stranding" caused a huge damage to country's infrastructure, making the remaining population confine themselves to remote colonies known as "Knot Cities". Transportation and the internet are breakdown, and people are living in isolation because of the danger outside. The main character, Sam, as a courier, his job is to be the one connects every colonies by delivering supplies, information and setting up the network.

Connection is the main theme of the game. It is not only interpreted in the plot, but also shown in the system. Death Stranding provides the players with a kind of hybrid single player/multiplayer experience. As the player make the ways across America, he may build structures to help him overcome obstacles—a rope to descend mountains, or a bridge to cross a river.

This is what Kojima, the leader of Kojima Productions wants the players to feel in the game, being connected to someone. "There are so many people who play games feeling like that, like they don't belong in this society. They don't really feel comfortable," he says. "The game is about connecting the world and you're trying to connect this fractured society by yourself...Just knowing that, you won't feel alone anymore."



If the player leaves them behind, other players connecting to the Internet would find them.

If a rugged path is walked by so many players, it would become plain.

If another player is shouting at an exact location you are, you would be able to hear their voice.

You will never see another player in the game, but you can find their traces everywhere.

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