

# Newsletter

Department of Foreign Languages & Applied Linguistics · National Taipei University

## December

### Merry Christmas!

DEAR READERS:

Christmas is just around the corner! Here, we compile the Newsletter for you with all our heart. Hope you can enjoy reading it and have a nice Christmas and New Year for the coming 2008!

#### A Funeral Junior 黃伊婷

"Mama, Mama, Mama! It's Papa," shouted a girl, waving her hand excitedly toward an empty chair near the black cold coffin, right inside which a middle-aged male body lied peacefully.

There was no response from the mother, who now stood absently in the living room, lost in thought. Some tears, quarrelling noises and horrifying screams on that afternoon were still echoing in her ear tunnels just like an unanswered phone call ringing and ringing all the time.

Strangely, right at this moment there was no sign of sorrow in the dining room in this house. Even some splashes of laughter boldly sneaked out through the seam of the door.

It was the two sisters of the dead.

At this moment they were sipping some champagne and chewing beef steak. The sweet fragrant of the red wine sprinkled out of the rising

corners of the sisters' mouths, swirling with the happy words spitted out. Their hands were also busily cutting the scarlet rare steak. Like in a wedding banquet, the air in this dining room smelled of celebration.



sisters of  
"Mama,  
Mama!



It was  
the two  
the dead.  
Mama,  
Papa,

there," the little girl spoke again, still pointing at the empty chair. Because seeing her father, the excitement made the girl's cheeks as crimson as her dark mourning clothes could be. "Gift in Papa's hand," went on the girl, and started to giggle. Then without any hesitation, she just ran toward the chair.

"Tommy. . ." The mother finally said something. "Where's Tommy? Did you see your brother?" But the girl did not stop to answer her mother at all. She just kept running to the chair around which the mother could only see a bunch of withered chrysanthemums.

"Mom, did you see Tommy," asked the mother. Now she positioned her head in the direction where an old lady sat. The old lady did not have any response to this question. Sixty years in this house had already trained her into silence itself. She was now quiet as deadly as the one who lied in the grave coffin. Only the moving lips hung on this old lady's face, shivering for the prayer for her son, showed the sign of her still being alive.

"Tommy? Where are you?" The mother began to step

out of the door of the house. A strong weird wind suddenly blew on the mother's pale face, messing her untied hair.

It was all dark outside. Only slightly shining brims of the clouds could indicate where the moon was. Just in such a night few days ago, this mother's husband died.

"Just sign here," the mother started to recall the words the two sisters thrown on her on that afternoon when they put the property alienation contract in front of her. "You won't need that much money. You should return to us the money our father gave to your husband two years ago. *That* is our money. That is *our* money. Don't play any trick."

Stunned by those *defending* words, without any second thought, the mother just hysterically hugged her Tommy, her only boy, afraid that she might lose her last evidence or her only chance to declare the legality of the property in this family.

"Look, we try to be reasonable here. You know, today only three of us can decide whom the money belongs to. You should've also known that two years ago, our father didn't leave us any money. *None!* So now we want *that* back. Your husband shouldn't own all the money our father had."

Though listening on the spot, with eyes wandering, the old lady was so abstracted and silent as if she should have been the one who lied in the grave coffin.

Seconds later, the persuasive words were far

strengthened by the contract being shoved much forward toward the mother by one of the sisters. "Please, just sign it. Everything will be fine. Don't get yourself into trouble. *Please.*"

The air froze . . . as solid as the sisters' mind.

Suddenly, "*No!*" screamed the mother.

In the next second the mother just broke down on the floor, tearing the contract into pieces and crying insanely.

Meanwhile, the monstrous volume of the mother's voice, as an unexpected heart beat from a dying person, violently drew the old lady's eyes back. Then she anxiously looked around in the living room. When catching the sight of the black coffin, her breath almost choked her, as if it was the first time she found that she was accompanied with her son's dead body. The old lady wailed.

"Mama, Mama, Mama. Papa, Papa! Mama!" The little girl stood at the door yelling at her mother and pointed inside. The excitement of the girl's voice waked the mother back to the present.

"Did you see Tommy?" The mother started to step back into the house, ignoring what her daughter said, with the eyes still searching around.

Now the laughter in the dining room disappeared, and was replaced by some hushed female voices, which became a complete blur through the seam of the door.

The little girl followed her mother closely and tried hard to share something with her mother.

"Mama, Mama, what's this?" Now in the girl's hand was a dose of white powder. "Is it what you give me to eat every day, Mama, Mama," asked the girl, pulling her mother's clothes.

Tommy was still gone. . .

"Mama, Mama! Papa said Aunt put this in his food, too. He doesn't like it. He told me to ask you why. What why? Mama. What why? Mama?"

Nowhere. Nowhere could the mother find Tommy.

"DID YOU SEE TOMMY," this time the mother cried loud.

Horrified, the girl thought

her mother got mad at her, so she nervously loosed her hand from her mother's clothes. But as if she also wanted to know where Tommy was, she just gazed at her mother innocently.

Just then the mother rushed toward the children's room. It was a girl's room now, no sign for a boy. Only a picture near the bedside board could show where Tommy was.

It was two years ago. Before the car accident, Tommy liked to go fishing with his grandpa by bicycle. In the picture he stood at the lake with his grandpa aside putting his right hand on him. Under the great sunshine, the boy in the picture now smiled mutely at his mother.

"Where is Tommy. . . ? Where is Tommy. . . ?" Looking at the picture, the mother murmured, really lost at this time.

The laughter in the kitchen again started to leak out of the seam of the door lightly and finally covered the sobbing of the mother.

### The Hypocrite Junior 黃雯琪

Jane got off the bus, feeling a puff of fresh and moisturized breeze which smoothed her face. Staring at her cute friends, she felt strong pessimism and jealousy. As usual, she was pessimistic and bad-tempered, and these push her to the extreme.

Her friends complained that the luggage was too heavy. *Who ask you to bring so much rubbish here! If you hope that I will help you. It's impossible!* Giving her friends a disdainful look, Jane craned her neck and stretched limbs over others to find her luggage. Dragging her luggage for about twenty minutes, she got to her Bread & Breakfast. After checking in and settling down herself, Jane fell asleep immediately. However, her friends brought their luggage in and giggled. *The princess cannot sleep! You noisy servants!*

"Do you want to go with us to the Starbucks tomorrow?"

One of her friends asked. Jane did not like her very much, because she once borrowed

notebooks from Jane. *Did you think I would like to lend you my precious notebooks? Hah? The reason I lend them to you was that I am open-minded! Don't think I have forgotten about that!*

With a smile, Jane said, "Of course! We should go to the Starbucks located at the highest altitude!"

Not wanting to care about her friends, Jane went to ask the receptionist politely if there were any other single rooms she could change; however, the lady said there was no room available for the moment, and reminded her that she could not find any surplus rooms from other B & Bs at night. *I don't want to sleep with those noisy idiots! The irate Jane had no choice, so she gave herself a benevolent reason for her later decision. I have to endure only one night. I am the princess! If someone dares to interfere with my nice dream, I will thrust her! However, I am benevolent, so I will only note the devilry down in my mind. Ha-Ha!*

The next day, Jane was happy to start her itinerary.



*Even though those stupid fools were insane all the night, I did not care about*

*that.*

"Sorry! We are too excited. Last night we must be too noisy," One of girls said.

"It's okay. I am too joyful to sleep well, too," Jane said gently. *You hypocrite! Don't you consider pretense as disgust? Don't you know what a beautiful princess need most is sleep?*

"You're really a nice girl, Jane." The "notebook" friend said with a smile.

After finishing her breakfast in the cafeteria, Jane and her friends strode along the path. Jane took a package of cookies, and saw that there were little white dots on the green grassland. She walked closer; lots of white sheep ate grass and sometimes glanced at her.

"How cute the sheep are! I want to picture them!" One of the girls cried out excitedly.

*Cluck! If you scare the cute sheep away, I will fight with you!*

"Yes! They are really cute, aren't them?" Jane said

insincerely and shared her cookies with the sheep.

When she did so, a sheep approached the fence as if it smelled the scent from the cookies. Jane gave a piece to the sheep and it chewed funnily. She fed one by one until all cookies were distributed. Finally, they left and ignored her. She felt a little bit disappointed. All of a sudden, she smelled a puff of stink around her. Jane sniffed her hands and the sour disgusting scent assailed her nostrils. My god! The sheep! She felt angry and had no choice but to stare at the happy sheep that turned their backs on her. *I'm a princess! You damned sheep! I will roast all of you!*

With the sheep's disgusting scent, Jane asked that her friends accompanied her to Cingjing Small Swiss Garden. The path was over one kilometer. The Maple Forest was so beautiful even though the leaves were still green. She imagined that those leaves must be like flaming fire in autumn. While she was relaxing on the sight of the maples, it started to rain! Jane did not know what she could do at that moment but to dispose of her petrifying friends and take shelter from rain under a tree. Some tourists complained about the rain under the trees, and some ran along the path to other places. *Damned it! How can you do this to me? Don't you know I am a princess? Being a princess means I have to live leisurely and gracefully!*

Nevertheless, it rained cats and dogs; Jane ran to Cingjing Small Swiss Garden. When she got to the destination, she gasped for air and sweated. When she leaned on a chair and drank water, two men sitting there looked at her. She deliberately sat down with grace such as a lady, and she turned her head back every few minutes but pretended to wait for someone. The two men whispered with each other and laughed.

And then, one of them handed a slip of paper to Jane. He smiled and said gently. "Please open the paper after we go away because we are too shy to say the content to such a lady like you!"

"Thank you!" Jane gave him a very sweet smile.

When the two gentlemen went far away, Jane unfolded the paper feverishly. It was written, "You are too ugly to be approached!" Jane was annoyed and sliced the paper into pieces shivering. *You hypocrite! You think having a good face is everything!* Jane stepped on the chips heavily again and again.

With annoyance, Jane took a walk in Cingjing Small Swiss Garden. A souvenir shop attracted her. The shop sold lots of delicate souvenirs, but the thing most attractive to her was plum! She liked the sweet and sour flavor of plum very much, so she bought the plum for 50 N.T. dollars. She went to the side of pool and ate one. Yes, it was indeed sour, but not sweet; the plums had expired! Jane returned to the souvenir store in a hurry, but the store had been closed! *What a bad scenic spot! Bad weather! Expired plum! No friend!*

Jane was discontent with the entire thing happened. Going to the cafeteria to have the delicious lunch is the only one good thing to make her satisfied. She strode out of the cafeteria and went to the Starbucks located in the highest altitude in Taiwan. Even though the coffee in Starbucks was very expensive, she still ordered a cup of Cappuccino. Leisurely stirring the milk and sipping the coffee, she took a rest and sat herself on a wicker chair. "You are here!" Jane's "notebook" friend appeared and said.

"Yes! I'm drinking coffee. This is really a good place!"

*It's all because of you! I'm not lucky today all resulted from your existence!* Unconsciously putting her hands in pockets, Jane was shocked by feeling nothing in the pockets. *My key was gone!* Not caring about her friends, Jane hurriedly drank up her coffee and exasperatedly returned to the entire road she had walked. *It's entirely your fault! Because of you!* Jane cursed her unwitting friend along the path. Finally, she requested for help from the Visitor Service Center; in the end, she found the key! The guard said a visitor picked her key up on the path in The Maple

Forest. Jane thanked for the guard. *If you don't find my key, I must complain about your omission to your boss!* At the same time, her cell-phone rang.

"The bus is going to start in one hour; do you want to go home?" The "notebook" friend called from the other side.

"Okay! I'm on the road! Wait for me, please!"

*I'm not stupid! I know the importance of time more than you do!* Jane sniffed and gave a disdainful look. She went back to the Bed and Breakfast.

"I love this place very much, Jane." The "notebook" friend said happily.

"Me too," Jane said as happily as the friend.

After checking out, on her way back Jane thought, "I would not like to return to Cingjing Farm again."

## Change

Junior 賴映蓉

In a comfortable afternoon, a girl was looking for something in her mother's chifforobe. But there were many old things there, including an old neckerchief, old gloves, old clothes, old silk stockings, an old leather belt, and an old heavy book in between which a letter was placed. She took the letter and opened it. The words jumped into her eyes and looked very familiar. She must have seen these words in some place. Yes, these were her own handwriting even though they were written long ago in her ignorant and innocent age.



That day was a sunny day. Sunshine shed on earth, on roads, on trees, and on her. It was like a melodious song chanting everywhere for such a lovely day. Seeming to be infected with the sunshine, she was in a great mood all the day. She felt that the entire world belonged to her, and she was so elated. After school, she rode her bicycle home, meanwhile, enjoying the wonderful sunshine. However, there was no one downstairs when she arrived home. So she skipped up to stairs, opened the door of her room, and then saw her father standing and her mother sitting there sobbing.

She had no idea at that time until she saw the letter in her mother's hands. She recalled the letter. It was written a few days ago or maybe several weeks ago. Anyway, it was written after a violent quarrel between her and her mother. She wrote down her resentment in the letter. The letter was written to her best friend to complain about her mother. In the letter, she said how she hoped that "that woman" was not her mother at all, and she didn't want a mother who was mean and didn't know what she wanted. After finishing the letter, she did not send out the letter. She was not a girl who would take time and energy to huggermugger a letter. Therefore, she hid it randomly under her pillow. The next day, she totally forgot the letter under her pillow. And she never knew that there would be a storm being formed under her pillow. Maybe she thought that the letter was not a big deal since it was written in a rage. But she never expected that the letter would bring her such a catastrophe.

She called to mind the letter in her mother's hands. She did not know what to say, but just standing still. Bitterly her mother was weeping for the letter. Her mother was crying fiercely as if she was abandoned by the whole world and lost all. Her mother questioned her, "What discontent do you have in the world? I raised you hardily and let you have education. But what do you do in return for me?" Nevertheless, she just stood still and waited, not knowing what to answer. The letter was a real truth spreading out there. She did not have any standpoint to contravene, and she even had no standpoint to comfort her mother. She felt like to soothe her mother for she did not mean to hurt her mother by the letter. If she could, she wouldn't hide it under the pillow or she wouldn't write the letter. Thanks to her father, there was still someone who could console her poor sad mother.

"It is just the kid's callowness. Don't think too much," her father said. Then her father clasped her mother, who held the letter

tightly and cried violently, and left along with her mother. They walked downstairs together.

People always reflect on themselves when the quiet comes after the bustle. People only feel forlorn and helpless when the whole world is as silent as the grave. Though she could hear her mother crying from downstairs, and she knew she was not alone for this crying accompanied her, she did feel helpless and bushed. At one moment she was in a chaos, but at the next moment she was in deep thought, thinking about the letter and what her mother only just said. Nothing, nothing, she could think of nothing. Standing by the window and blankly looking at the sight outside, she was pondering long and deeply over the letter. Still nothing, she could think of nothing still. She only knew that she really did not mean to hurt her mother by writing the letter. But the harm had been done. There was her mother's crying like a grievous song haunting beside her ears on such a good day. All of a sudden, she took a deep breath. Outside the window, the sun was covered with dark clouds. The shine did not shed on earth, on roads, on trees, and on her. And then she shed tears. *Does the sun refuse to offer me warmth because of this letter? Won't mother give love to me any more? Do I lose the most precious thing in this world? Am I alone now? Am I deserted?* Her tears were triggered due to her mother's crying. Hot tears spilled from her eyes constantly,



rolled down her cheeks, and fell on the cold floor. She could not but to daresay that her mother's love was perhaps frozen because of the letter. She kept seeing the sunshine disappearing bit by bit and the sky getting darker and darker. Finally, the dark night enveloped the whole world as well as her world. She felt that she was completely abandoned and was devoured by a world without love.

A middle-aged woman stands by the window and thinks of this memory about the letter she wrote, holding a letter in her hands. It is a bright day

today. The sun is showing its glamour outside, and the sunshine is shedding on earth, on roads, on trees, and maybe on her little girl. Nevertheless, there are some dark clouds encircling the mountains far. The woman loses herself in meditation for a moment, and after a while begins to realize how much sorrow and heartbreak the swollen eyes of her old mother had concealed long ago. The woman stops her sad tears timely, dries her eyes, walks to her room, opens the chifforobe, and places the letter in between a heavy book. She still loves her little girl just like her old mother still loves her. The middle-aged woman approaches the window again, and she is pondering on the ways she should treat her little girl and the measures she should take. But she assures herself that one thing should be done. That is, a change. She needs to change.

## Insanity

Junior 林玉書

The moment I woke up, the world seemed abnormal.

"Oh, gosh! Why didn't you wake me up, honey? I'm going to be late!"

Through my bleary eyes, I saw my wife bouncing up. She dressed herself with a tie and a business suit. I was bewildered by the sight. Rubbing my sore eyes, I saw the hour hand pointing at about 1, and the sky was still dark. "What are you doing now? It's just 1:00 a.m. And...why do you wear a man's suit!?"

She looked at me with surprise and said, "I'm a man, certainly I have to wear a man's suit. Honey, you seem a little weird today. Maybe you're too exhausted to keep clear-headed. I'll have my breakfast outside, so you can take more rest in bed. Besides, don't forget to take care of Johnny. And most important of all, remember to watch our annual show." She kissed me good-bye on my forehead and left.

What the hell was that?

I sat up stunned, staring at the door where my wife had just left, speechless. Was she

making fun of me? Was today April Fool's Day? I checked the calendar. No, it's not. Then...what the hell was that? I walked by the window and was astonished by the scene—every road was loaded with cars. I glared at my watch to make sure that I didn't confound the correct time. No mistake. But...traffic jam at midnight? Why were there so many people busily leaving home when it was deep in the night?

Pondering and withdrawing my eyes from this exceptional phenomenon, I took notice of my reflection from the mirror of the dressing table. To my great surprise, I was wearing a nightdress! What's that? Why did I wear woman's dress when sleeping? Did my wife change my clothes when I slept soundly? Did she think it was funny? It was no fun! I started to get a little bit annoyed, and all of a sudden, I heard little Johnny cried out "Mommy, I'm hungry. Can we have breakfast now?" Oh, damn! Elizabeth was not home, for the sake of the boring game, and I had to take the full responsibility to take care of Johnny.

When I walked downstairs and stepped into the dining room, with a glamorous smile, Johnny ran to me, hugged me, kissed my cheek, and said, "Good morning, Mommy." Uniting with your mom to cheat me? I breathed hard, but finally heaved a sigh, and said, "Johnny, don't play that game anymore. Daddy doesn't like it. Stop, OK?"

With innocent and puzzled expression and eyes widely opened, Johnny said, "Mommy, why did you call yourself Daddy? And...what game? I'm not playing a game." For a while his glamorous smile crawled on his face again. "Are you playing with me, Mommy? But I'm really hungry. Can we have breakfast first, and then we can play together?" After finishing the few last words, Johnny dashed to the dining table and was seated straight, waiting for the meal. Since I was a little hungry myself, I gave in and started to prepare something for us to eat. Maybe I had to fill my stomach first so that I could have enough strength to confront their "hilarious" game.

After the meal, Johnny rushed out of the door and said, "Mommy, let's go to see Daddy's performance. Hurry up! Or we can't occupy the best seats!" "Come back, Johnny! Don't you know how late it is? You're not going anywhere! It's midnight! Wait! Johnny! COME BACK!" I howled loudly but the only thing I gawked at was the door where Johnny had disappeared. Furiously, I went upstairs, taking off the stupid nightdress and putting on a normal shirt and pants, and chased after Johnny hastily outside to find him back.



Once again, I couldn't believe my eyes upon seeing the scene outside. The moon was glistening brightly and softly in the dark sky. It's really midnight, but there were people everywhere. On my way to find Johnny, I saw flocks of men like transvestites wearing dresses, skirts, and high heels. "Yuck!" I couldn't help giving them a despising gaze. Not only those men, but women were dressing themselves with suits or ties or anything which should belong to men. Could it be a masquerade night? As I pondered single-mindedly, I heard those men giggling and gossiping, just like multitude of sissies. What startled me the most was that one of the sissies was my colleague in the trade company. Ordinarily he was an even-tempered and mature man. How come he became a nauseous creature like this? I turned my head in order to shun the sight which made me uncomfortable, and unexpectedly an extraordinary view caught my attention. I beheld that those "vehicles" which were galloping on the road were not cars, but various kinds of "animate" animals, and people were riding on them like driving a car. There were leopards, goats, giraffes, even ostriches. A woman steering passed through me slowly grumbled, "If I had enough money, I would buy a better car, not this stupid slow panda car. No matter how early I get up, I am late for work every



day and scolded by my boss. Shoot! That leopard car overtakes me! I have enough of it!" The panda tossed an innocent but helpless eye on its master, as if protesting that it was not its fault.

I began to feel dizzy. What happened to the world? It was me who had enough of it! I rubbed my temples to ease the spinning ache in my head, deciding that finding Johnny was my top priority now. I observed that all the people were heading to the same direction. Although I was unwilling to track those freaks, I reluctantly yielded because the thought that Johnny might go to the same place as they did hit me.

Striving to take no notice to the nuts, finally, I followed them into the National Theatre. Pausing at the splendid gate, I read the gilding words on the cardinal banner, "ANNUAL GLORY COMPETITION." I stared at them awhile, a treacherous feeling crept on me from bottom to top and made me shiver out of an unknown fear. I squeezed through the people nervously who were waiting in line to park their animals and then I went into the hall. Just as expected, I saw Johnny sitting in the first row. Upon seeing me, Johnny skipped up cheerfully, waving to me and yelling, "Mommy! I'm here! I get the best seats for us to see Daddy's show!" The sense of eccentricity and discomfort overwhelmed me, making me desperate to grab Johnny to flee and get rid of the eerie feeling flowing here.

But it was too late. When I finally jostled to Johnny's side, the curtains of the stage ascended slowly; meanwhile, the whole crowd were stirred to wild enthusiasm, shouting and making uproar. The theatre was too overcrowded for me to move at all, and the enormous clamor made me deafening and lose my thoughts. The curtain rose to the top; trying every endeavor to pull Johnny out of the madding crowd, I got a glimpse of my wife and a woman standing on the stage with swaggering expression, and beside them were rows of shelves different kinds of objects laid, such as axes, hand

drills, hammers, etc. The audience seemed abnormally excited, with their eyes full of blood and craze. The smiles on their face looked hazardous and creepy.

All the people applauded and hailed upon seeing the host, all smiles, strode from the back of the stage to make a simple introduction. "Welcome to the magnificent annual show today. Let me introduce briefly the two prominent heroes of this show. The left side is...Mr. CATHARINE! The right side is...Mr. ELIZABETH." Beneath the stage, the audience acclaimed with joy and passion as the two waved and beamed. "Since everyone can't wait for it, let's start this show right now! It will be the performance of their lifetime!" A bell rang euphonically and the host receded to the back of the stage; in the meantime, all the audience lost their mind, roaring even violently. The two women on the stage suddenly were like mentally deranged monsters howling and making aggressive attack on each other by the weapons on the shelves.

I was too astounded to make any reaction to their terrifying scene at first, but as I saw the other woman cut off Elizabeth's piece of flesh by the sharp sickle, I regained consciousness, screamed and yelled at everyone to stop this brutal show. But no one seemed to notice my voice in the tumultuous condition. I hurriedly ran up onto the stage and exhausted all my strength to stop the two women's insane competition.

The instant I stopped them, the whole theatre was abruptly in dead silence. It was too tranquil that I thought if a needle dropped on the ground, the sound would be heard like a thunder cracking in the sky. I turned my body dreadfully and slowly, gasping and swallowing hard as I saw the whole spectators glowered at me with reddish eyes and grinded their teeth in anger. I gathered all my courage and shouted, "What on the earth are you guys doing? You barbaric lunatics!" I leaned to my wife in want of checking her wound, but she only resentfully slapped my hand back, punched me mercilessly

and shrieked, "Don't bother us! What the damn thing are you doing? Get out of the stage! GET OUT!" Along with my wife, the other woman pushed me relentlessly down the stage as well. I couldn't control my body from falling from the stage; the last sensation I felt was the storm of manifold of personal stuff darting on my body from the grandstands, and the last words I heard pounded my heart severely from almost everywhere, "THIS PERSON IS INSANE! THIS PERSON IS INSANE! PUT HER TO DEATH! PUT HER TO DEATH!" Then I fainted.

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When I came around, I saw throngs of people assembled around me; some of them were whispering, some were checking my body, but all of them were casting their hostilities toward me. I licked my dry lips and requested feebly, "What happened to me? Where am I?"

"How do you feel, honey? You just interrupted the annual competition! What a crime it is! Everyone is mad at you. I think ordinarily you act normally. You are only a little unusual today, so I requested the sponsor to spare you a little time to rest, or they can execute you in no time." My *husband* suspiciously looked at me, as if *he* was trying to find some clues from my reaction to confirm whether I was as normal again.

"Oh! Really? I made such a big mistake!? What the fucking thing did I do to hold back this important event? I'm so sorry...I...I don't know why I had this stupid reaction..." I harmlessly fixed my eyes on my husband, with eyes full of regretful tears. My *husband* hugged me fondly and said, "That's fine, my dear *wife*. You appear to recover from the peculiar thoughts that blocked your normal beauty." *He* gave me a gentle smile and turned back to speak to the crowd who were all observing us, "She's OK now. We can continue our competition." The crowd cried with joy and all hurried back to their seats immediately. I seated next to Johnny, who turned *her* face from the frosty

look to a warm smile when hearing that I was true to form.

Later on, the two *men* continued fighting fiercely and desperately. As the whole crowd ravished with the sight of blood and savageness, I showed wild joy with them. When finally my *husband* fell down, with *his* lifeless body covered all over with cuts and bruises, I, along with Johnny and all the spectators were thrown into ecstasy. We screamed with glee, made small dances and cheered for the glorious competitors.

"*Mommy!* *Daddy* is dead with such great honor. How wonderful it is! I want to be like *Daddy* in the future!" *Her* face beamed in rejoicings as I gave her an approving grin.

But suddenly, I felt a tear drop rolling down through my cheek.



**On the Street**  
Junior 徐孟瑞

Under the dim streetlight, a dingy man walked tipsily. In his right hand was a cigarette butt picked up from the ground. In his left hand, strangely, was a wrinkled lottery. He was so stinky that even dogs did not want to approach him. None of the people on the street was willing to give him a hand. People saw him as if they saw nothing. In people's eyes, he was just a vagrant to whom once you showed your kindness, he would cling to you all the time. Everyone, therefore, was used to ignoring this kind of people. But none of you could imagine that this man—Albert Barry—was once a member of the middle class and led a rosy life with a lovely wife and two clever children.

Albert Barry was a manager of a famous electronic company. He had a steady income, a car of famous brand and a huge house with a great and colorful garden. His wife, Clare, was lovely and they had two little kids. Albert had a life which everyone would consider to be wonderful. He also had some friends and one of his best friends was David Madson. David was not only Albert's close friend but also Albert's best associate in the company. Under their cooperation, the company had signed many successful contracts with other corporations. David, however, had a bad personality. He was so greedy that he had never given up any chance to make big money. David had once got an opportunity to make insider trading. Insider trading was illegal but one could really get a lot of interests by making it. David, therefore, took the chance to make insider trading without any hesitation. Albert knew his friend's bad characteristic but he had never tried to stop David from taking the risk of earning big money. It was his indifference to David's bad personality that made himself down-and-out.

Several years ago there was a great mass fervor of cotton business. The cotton business was a way to earn big money in a very short period but behind the huge number of money was an unbelievable high risk. Catching the fever, David abetted Albert to join with him to invest the cotton business. At first, they put some money into the cotton business and they really got some benefit beyond their expectation. Gradually, they put more and more money into the cotton business and they hoped to become a millionaire in one day. However, there came a hurricane and all countries which produced cotton trees were in a very bad situation. The cotton business suddenly lost the source of the most important material—the cotton. The cotton company which Albert and David put lots of money in collapsed. Both of them were in terrible debt.

In order to pay the huge debt, at first Albert sold his famed car but it was not enough.

There were still lots of liabilities waiting for him to pay. He had no choice but selling his lovely house with a great colorful garden. It was still far from paying all debt. At the end of his rope, he even borrowed money from juice dealers. He now had a new trouble to deal with in his daily life; that was, to evade the pressure from those covert money dealers. He had no home to return to. The only thing he could do everyday was lingering in parks, the streets underground or abandoned buildings. Clare divorced Albert and took away their two little kids when she knew he borrowed money from juice dealers. Everything in Albert's life had changed since the failure of investing the cotton business.



The steady and warm family suddenly broke down.

Being tired of evading the pressure from those covert money dealers, Albert decided to face the music. He wanted to do something to change his miserable life. Walking slowly, he saw a lottery store at the corner of the street. "I believe God still loves me. He has not yet abandoned me. He gives me the last chance to alter my life. I will seize it," Albert whispered ecstatically. He spent the last money in his pocket buying a lottery. The highest bonus of this lottery was US\$10,000,000. Albert hoped he could win the prize and use this money to pay his debt. The probability to win a lottery, however, was incredibly low. He did not win any prize. What his last money brought was nothing but endless despair. He understood that even God had deserted him.

Under the dim streetlight, a man walked tipsily. In his right hand was a cigarette butt picked up from the ground. In his left hand was the wrinkled lottery, which deprived him of the meaning of breathing.

### A Fatally Irresistible Taboo

Junior 謝依彤

"Ph...Phobos...I...I've got something to...to tell you,"

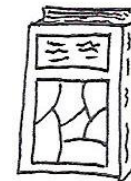
mumbled Lyra.

"Whatever you want to say, say it. Don't mince words; it's not like you," said Phobos a little impatiently, squint-eyed and arms-folded.

"I...I...What do you think of me? Ah, no, no, I mean...I...I like you!" She snarled out the last few words with almost all her strength, and then waited with a bated breath. But seconds after another, only silence overbearingly stepped in between the two.

"Hum...Lyra? To me you are a bosom buddy, a very important friend. And that's all. I don't want to hurt you but...I think you know what I mean. And of course we are still best friends, right? Lyra? Are you still listening to me? You know what I mean?"

"Perfectly..." Tears bleared everything in front of her. Not knowing what to say, she lurched feebly out of the classroom just in time so that Phobos didn't see her tears dropping.



Left alone in the classroom listening to Lyra's sobs fading away, Phobos started to wonder. Why not Lyra? She was forthright and sincere. She was considerate. She was the most beautiful girl he had ever met. And, the most important of all, they were so close that he thought there wouldn't be anyone who knew him better than she did. She seemed to be a perfect mate, but why did he never feel a bit love for her? Going into whys and wherefores, he discovered that it seemed he never fell for a woman however charming she might be. *Maybe it's simply because he hadn't met his Miss Right yet.* This question didn't stay long on his mind because all that he was looking forward to full-heartedly was the basketball game he was going to watch the next day with Orion, now one of his classmates in his sophomore year.

It was a fine Saturday afternoon. The audience swarmed into the stadium in droves, and fortunately Orion and Phobos arrived early enough to pick out two seats with quite a good view. Packed

to capacity, the stadium was like a clamorous market. The game was great and the players did put up a splendid show in which the two boys shouted, laughed, praised, swore, and enjoyed themselves. During the halftime show, there were cheer teams consisting of pretty girls performing artfully and lively.

"You see the girl with a ponytail over there? She is so cute! And I'm sure I saw her glancing at me!" Laying his left arm on Phobos' shoulder, Orion said excitedly.

"Which one?" Phobos turned to Orion in order to find out which direction his eyes were fixed on. But on turning and seeing Orion's face enlarged right in front of him, for no reason Phobos suddenly felt his cheek flush and his heart skip a beat.

"Ye...Yeah...She's cute..." echoed Phobos perfunctorily. Phobos was unable to figure out what it was, and this subtle affection did prevent Phobos from continuing to concentrate on the rest of the game.

After dinner, Phobos came back to his own apartment and his five-year-old husky, Deimos, greeted him enthusiastically as usual. Deimos was very smart as if he could understand human language whenever Phobos talked to him, and thus Deimos became the best listener to whom Phobos was used to baring his soul. After a shower and getting something for Deimos to eat, he tiredly lay on his bed with Deimos' head laying on his belly and grunted, "you know what, Deimos, today I think I did experience something different, or maybe something I have been longing for...I still don't know exactly what it was, but I'm sure it must be something related to Orion, and I have to admit that he...I can...he...he's..." After a long silence, Deimos raised and tilted his head and saw Phobos had already fallen asleep.

On Monday, Phobos didn't have the same class with Orion and he seemed to have forgotten his bemusement last Saturday. However, Phobos gradually found himself unable to tear his gaze away from Orion whenever they had the same class, which of course was all noted by Lyra, for

Phobos was still someone who attracted most of Lyra's attention. One day, Phobos' phone rang and it was Orion.

"Let's play one-on-one after school!" said Orion through the phone.

"Sure! See ya then!" replied Phobos without hesitation.

Successfully surviving those classes that were as boring as usual, Phobos rushed to the basketball court just like an elementary schoolboy rushing to the candy shop after class. He found Orion, with his shirt off because of the scorching hot weather, standing under the sun and waving at him. On the court Orion and Phobos crouched and dashed and leapt; their two shadows moved swiftly. The one holding the ball watched for his chance to shoot; the other stretching his arms wide tried hard to block any chance his opponent was looking for, which meant the inevitable contact of their limbs and trunks. When Phobos' back was pushed by Orion's naked chest, Phobos found himself going pit-a-pat again. "It's not a good sign," Phobos thought. While Phobos' feelings and thoughts slowed his movement, Orion sensed it almost immediately.

"Why are you slowing down? Already tired?" asked Orion.

"No, no, of course not, we've just started playing!" answered Phobos quickly.

Orion stopped. "To tell the truth, I found you go blank many times since we went to the game together the other day. I'll know if you try to smooth it over. So come clean, Phobos. What's on your mind?" Orion asked quite casually with a suspicious smile. Hearing Orion's words, Phobos was all in a sweat and suddenly motionless.

"Wh...What?"

"Or should I say, WHO's on your mind?"

"What do you mean? Who are you referring to? You can see there you...just keep you..."

Not letting him finish, Orion interrupted, "Stop! What are you raving about? So I guessed right and you do like Brea, the girl on the cheer team!" Phobos thought about it for a while and said, "Who is she?" Bewildered,

Orion inferred, "You forgot? So it's not Brea, but who else, then? Mmm... Ha! I got it! It's me, right? Ha ha! Come on, let's snog!" Orion pretended to hug Phobos, which made Phobos shocked and blushful. Seeing Phobos speechless and then pausing suddenly, Orion shouted, "Hey, hey, hey, why are you blushing! I'm just joking! ... Whatever, let's get something to eat, I'm starving!" "Um...m. Sure, me too."

They sat at a food stand. Orion said, "Do you want some cuttlefish? It's good!"

"No, thanks. By the way, I remember the girl you just mentioned. Brea, right? I remember that day you insisted we exchange our phone numbers with her when the game ends, and she called me the day after the game hoping to see me again, but I refused. Are you still in touch with her now?" Phobos dug into a big plateful of fried rice in front of him as he talked. But when he raised his head as the question was raised, he didn't get the answer but only saw Orion trying hard to stick his tongue out to see if it's been blackened by the ink from the cuttlefish. Phobos burst out laughing. "I can help you!" Phobos stretched out his hand to pull Orion's tongue; Orion laughed and hit him on his head. This began a battle full of swearing and laughter.

On his way home, Phobos kept waving his fists thinking about how interesting the battle was. Suddenly his fists froze in the air as he recalled his unanswered question. Orion mentioned Brea, the girl Orion seemed to be fond of. *Is Orion still in touch with her? Are Orion and Brea going out without me? Or is Orion already seeing her now?* Tons of questions without answers blotted out Phobos' good mood a few seconds before. Knowing it's impossible to figure out the answers by himself, Phobos took out his phone and dialed Orion's number. When hearing the familiar tune "To Be With You" and waiting for Orion to answer it, Phobos hanged up the phone abruptly disregarding Orion's repeatedly saying hello from the other side of the phone. Phobos started to ponder why those



questions bothered him so much that he had to get the answers right away. Then he thought of those good times he shared with Orion in which he had those unspeakable feelings in his heart of hearts. All these pieces of memory pointed directly to the fact that he loved his best friend, who was a man.

It's very hard for him to face the reality though he knew he could no longer bury his head in the sand. He turned off his cell phone, shoved it into his pocket and rode on his motorbike heading for nowhere. He stared at the front, followed the line that separated the shade trees and passersby into two halves, and let speed blur things besides him to the fullest. His numbness made him neglect the time and how much gas was left. His motorbike gradually became slower and slower, and it finally ground to a halt. When Phobos raised his head and looked around, he found himself out of the concrete jungle he was familiar with.

Phobos sat by the road beside his motorbike motionlessly. Not knowing how long it had been, Phobos counted all his money and realized that there wasn't enough money to buy gas or to take any kind of transportation home. Then he slowly took out and turned on his cell phone, and saw many unanswered calls made by Orion, who was both the first and the last person he wanted to see now. He scanned the names in his telephone book in search of a friend, except for Orion, to help him out of this situation. He scanned the phone book one, two, three, four or more times. Staring at the screen, finally he surrendered and called Orion.

"Where are you?" Orion answered the phone almost immediately and shouted.

"I...I don't know where it is..."

"Any store in the vicinity? Hand the phone to the storekeeper. Let me ask him!"

After another two hours, Orion appeared with a barrel of gas and finally they both rode on their own motorbike and set off for home. When they were about to separate and head for their own apartment, suddenly

Orion stopped by the wayside, which forced Phobos to apply his emergency brake also. "What's up?" asked Phobos.

After a long silence, Orion said, "I know everything. I know why you blushed when we were playing basketball. I know what you're thinking when you look at me without saying anything." Phobos felt throttled and didn't breathe a word. Orion continued, "Honestly, I think it's ridiculous. You don't think I'm thinking in the same way, do you? I hope you can see the truth and face it." And then Orion left.

In the following days Phobos didn't appear at school; his phone was either turned off or left unanswered, and neither could he be found in his apartment.



"Where's Phobos? Why did he just vanish into thin air?" asked Lyra worriedly.

"I...think I was too harsh on him... I didn't mean to say it...I just couldn't accept that idea at that time..." Orion buried his face in his palms and murmured.

It took Lyra several seconds to see the light, "...You...How do you know that? I thought you've never had a doubt?"

"One of my friends, Brea, told me. But actually I don't know how she knew it."

"...It's me...We were close in senior high. I thought she didn't know anyone in our class so I just felt free to confide in her, but now...and...Phobos' gone, what about Deimos?"

"I'll take care of it. I believe Phobos is just going out for a distraction and someday he'll appear and talk to me as if nothing had ever happened. At that time he'll be glad that I can keep Deimos in good health as usual. I won't disappoint him again."

## Be Fair

Junior 汪斌卿

The dazzling light above me shone fiercely. I stood in front of a mirror, a big, full-length mirror, staring at my reflection, absent-minded, not noticing the floating cloud on the sky, the noisy twittering outside the window, the sudden fluttering of the birds on the twigs, and the light pink wedding gown on my body. Yes! I was getting married.

"Oh, you beautiful bride!" Ruth said as she walked in, her reflection shown on the mirror. She put a bunch of daisy and a box of present on the table. Ruth, my neighborhood, was also my best friend. I turned back, my shadow projecting a black-gray shape on the floor. "Thank you!" I said, giving her a big smile.

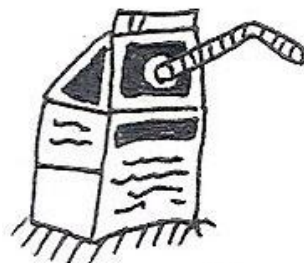
"Are you still thinking about that?" she asked, her right hand covering mine, on which wore a jade bracelet. "She will be here! Come on. She's your mother!"

"I don't know. Maybe," I said. "Is Tom here?" Tom was my little brother, who lived in Australia.

"I didn't see him. Maybe he will come with your mother. I'll check." Ruth consoled me, trying to give me hope. She went out. I stepped near the window, peering the floating cloud and plunging into my childhood.

Dad passed away early, so Mom brought us up alone. In this poor family, Tom and I must share many things: a bar of ice cream, chocolate bread, candy, and housework. Mom could always divide them equally. At least-- for her-- it was. For example, if an apple was bisected, the bigger part would always be Tom's. "Because he was younger, he needs more nutrition," she explained. Or, when sharing housework, the

heavier distribution would always belong to me. "Because you are older and stronger," she explained. I took all. But years later, I knew the explanation was far



from that, or more than that.



When we entered junior high, the rules remained the same - I still took less food and more housework; however, I started to doubt about the equality of the rules, and asked questions such as "Why should Tom eat more? Shouldn't I need nutrition?" or "Why should I do much homework? Tom is stronger." Many times, these thoughts came to my mind spontaneously, though I knew I should never thought of that, for Mom worked hard. When seeing her coming home with an exhausted face and sweat falling down her neck, I just could not ask "why." In those years, my brain was just like a haunted house, and these thoughts grew, echoed, groaned, and tried to find a way out.

"My June. What are you thinking?" Suddenly, a voice drew me back from my memory, and I was held in the arms, shocked. "Are you ok?"

Smelling the familiar smell, I knew it was Henry, the groom, to whom I was giving my hand. I said rigidly, without turning back, pretending to be angry, "You shouldn't be here! It's a no-no to see the groom. Bad luck."

Rather than answering my question, he hugged me more tightly, as if he were holding his treasure. "I heard from Ruth that you are still thinking about your mother." "Don't think too much. We are getting married, and you will have a new life."

Silence was my response, and I burst out a quick-fire shouting. "Hey! You shouldn't be here. Go back." I said strictly, as if I were exiling a rule-breaker.

"Ok! And promise me not to think too much," he said, not letting go his arms.

"Mm...I promise," I answered. I felt chocked, a sudden guilt rising from my stomach; I struggled out from his arms right away.

"Bye!" he said. The door

opened and closed again; he was out. Walking near the window, I peered through the blue sky. A bird swooped down.

**Sexism:** the belief that women are weaker, less intelligent, and less important than men.

A few years later, I read the meaning word-by-word, dumbfounded. I was punched by this noun and its definition, for the word unlocked my mind and explained the questions I'd doubted and the rules I'd followed as well. Tom was the treasure in my family. Everybody paid attention to him. He laughed. Mom was happy. He cried. Mom was worried. And I, in order to win my family's attention, did my best to get pride: I brought home medals one after another, I was the class leader in my classroom, and I even painted calligraphy well. But years passed, I still got no attention from them. Not a bit, not an atom. They remembered Tom's birthday every year, but forgot mine. In every Chinese New Year, I could always "accidentally" see much money in his red envelopes. The word sexism explained all. Just like what Ruth told me when I discussed this with her, "Male could get attention. Bias, unavoidable."

Tom went abroad; I went to work. His going abroad was of course supported by Mom; however, I did not want to ask her why, how, and anything so-called fair, because that would break my heart. At work, I met Henry, my colleague, a nice and thoughtful man, who purposed to me. I turned down. For me, falling in love was one thing, but getting married was another, not to mention how much I worried about Mom. One night, I decided to invite him to dinner and introduce him to Mom.

"Mom, this is Henry. My boy friend," I said, seeing her taking a bit of rice from the bowl, chewing, and making a quick smile. "Hi!"

The dinner was simple, but the atmosphere was extraordinarily weird. The dinner finished soon, Henry left, and nothing happened, too quiet to believe. What I imagined, such as Mom's interruption or Mom's extreme

reaction, did not happen.

"Mom, how do you feel about Henry?" I asked, rejoicing, leaning against the wall.

She sat on the sofa, watching the TV series, not turning back. "Fine," she then responded with monotone voice, as if Henry were a stranger and the meal was a joke.

"What if I stayed with you, not marrying him?" I asked.

"What a stupid thing!" she suddenly shouted, not even taking a look at me. "You are a woman. Women's responsibility was marriage and family, and that's all."

Our conversation ended. I replied nothing. A word tried to creep from my throat, but I gulped it. If she did not care about my life, I should not care about hers. We were indifferent. And

ironically, the next conversation started with a fight.

"Ma, why do you do that?" I decided to tell her my feeling and the anger imploding in my heart because one day I accidentally found in the inheritance sheet that Tom would get all the property and I, nothing.

"Do what?" Mom was washing dishes. She did not even take a look at me.

"I know you don't love me. You don't!" I shouted as if I were a dissenter marching in a parade, lifting a flag high and yelling "murders!"

Mom did not say anything. Maybe she was thinking about my words, or she did not even hear what I was talking about.

"I love you just as Tom does. Why can't you be fair?" I cried, "I am your daughter!"

Dishes crashed against the sink, making a heavy clang. She put down the dishes, still not turning back, her shoulder shivering with wrath. Sun beams shot in from the window, and I was dazzled.

"What do you mean I don't love you? How dare you say that?" She shouted like a tiger. "If I don't love you, I won't bear you or feed you. I will send you to the orphanage when you were a little baby. Did I make you hungry?"

"How?" I said, couldn't believe that she pretended to

cover everything, including the thing I already knew, "I saw the inheritance will!"

Stunned, dumbfounded, Mom was shocked, and then she knew what happened. With a cold and indifferent face, she declared word by word, "You selfish girl. You are just a GIRL, A FEMALE. What do you want? How can you want more?"

*I was a female.* I know it was a fact, a hard-and-fast truth, but I still could not believe it was claimed by her, like a trial, declared by the judge that *I was guilty*, not for any sin or crime, but for something I was born to be-- gender. I stared at her eyes for seconds. I ran away.

I didn't cry until I ran away from home. Streetlamps flew above like silky rains, whirling. I could hear my breath and feel my heart beating and myself sweating. Not knowing how far I had run, I just wanted to run away from the place I called *home*. I took my cell phone from my pocket, dialing a phone tagged "Henry."

Twenty minutes later, I sat on Henry's scooter and made a decision right on it. "Henry! I do!" I said. "What?" His voice floated from his helmet.

"I say I do. I am willing to be your wife," I said. The wind was strong, grazing through my face; my voice was weak, so weak that I could not even hear my words. I was freezing, tightly hugging him by his waist.

The sounds of firecrackers broke my thoughts and the slide-flying memory. I looked down. The guests were entering the hall, laughing as well as talking loudly; the party was to begin. I looked at the top of the tower on the other side of the city. The sun was to sink; the sky turned to orange yellow.

I walked near the mirror, looking at myself and considering a dilemma. On one hand, I was hungry for fighting to make my life reasonable. I had done my best to win attention from my family, and the failure somehow made my life meaningless. Getting married was definitely the best way to compensate myself. On the other hand, I was guilty because I was not prepared enough. I cheated on Henry and myself. Getting married was not fair and reasonable for both of

us. Maybe my life was totally a lie. And...Mom was a burden. Although I decided to get married, I still could not help but think of her. "Ridiculous," I whispered.

"Sis!" a voice appeared. I turned back, surprised. "Tom!"

"You are beautiful!" Tom said and came hugging me. "Congratulations!"

"Do you come alone?" I asked, hearing the switching of the doorknob. "Mom..." I whispered, seeing her entering. I knew it was high time for me to cry desperately or shout out of control. I didn't, but there was something in my throat.

Tom went out; Mom and I were left in the room.

"Mom," I said again, staring at the flower tiles on the floor and trying to break the ice. The following silence proved that *I failed again* and it reminded me everything I've done. I was not important. A loser.

"I'm sorry." I heard her apology, which was totally out of my expectation.

Not lifting my head, I turned back with tears swelling in my eyes. My tears straightly dropped down the floor. My eyes got wet. I did not know why she said that.

### Ecstasy

Junior 范德政

Sitting in front of his computer while immersed in the chat room, Murphy, an innocent teenager and sometimes subject to temptations, was the youngest as well as the most spoiled child in his family with a parent denying him nothing. When he saw a letter—E, his curiosity was aroused just like a cat. Therefore, he asked other key pals on the Internet what it was. It was said that "E" could rid one of worries as well as troubles, thus making one happier. And it happened that Murphy was dumped by his girlfriend, so he decided to give it a shot.

It was an evening. Murphy, dressed in his Sunday best with a mixed feeling of anxiety and thrill, was waiting for his new-made key pal—Mark, a

playboy who had tried "E" before. When Mark arrived, Murphy thought to himself, "He appears to be in low spirits." After some chit chat, they decided to leave for another key pal's house to have "fun."

On arrival, Kevin, the house owner with "E" to sell, came to greet them, but he was not going to get involved, only offering a place and other "necessities" for fun. When everything was set, music began to play. Then what they had to do was wait for "E" to take effect and make them "high." But Murphy was a rookie, not knowing how soon the drug would take effect and what kind of feeling and consequence he was going to get.

"How soon will I feel the E taking effect?" asked Murphy.

"It depends! But now that you are a rookie, I think it will take effect pretty soon. If you want it to take effect more quickly, just get moving around or dancing to the music," Mark replied.

After about thirty minutes, Murphy began to get a feeling of thrill from his lower body and so did Mark. As time ticked away, they got "higher and higher." Mark, standing behind Murphy, taught him how to shake his head to get "higher." After a while, Murphy couldn't control his body which was shaking like a mechanical toy. When the music was strong and loud, he ran like a wild dog as if having been kept in a cage for ages. But at this moment, he was released. However, they stopped all of a sudden. "E" took effect to the utmost and threw both of them into a point in which they probably would not have recognized their parents if they had appeared in front of both of them.

Taking a seat on the sofa, they went into their own world without being able to know anything around. Unlike Murphy's personalities in his daily life, he became very talkative in the world of his own. Sometimes he was murmuring; other times, he was talking nonsense to Mark. Since Murphy had no friends to talk to in real life, this could be an otherwise way of releasing emotion. It was during this period that he felt great sense of

contentment and belonging. It was because of this sense of feeling that he forgot his being dumped by his girlfriend. Lost in such a “wonderland,” Murphy could imagine a magic world in which he could fly and achieve everything with a flip.

Mark, lying aside, was not affected or maybe he was unaware, for he was long lost in the “K” world. He was quite enjoying it as could be seen from his relaxed and contented expression. Shortly after the “E” gradually lost its effect, they also came to their senses little by little. But for Mark who didn’t have enough “fun” and Murphy who still wanted to try the “K,” they decided to take one more.

“E plus K will definitely make you feel as if you are in a paradise,” said Mark. Just breathe some through your nose and don’t swallow it; I guess you are sure to love it.”

Not feeling bad about the “E,” Murphy thought it wouldn’t hurt to try something else. Therefore, Murphy used a straw to take a small “sip” through his nose. But before he knew it, he was just like riding a rocket into the outer space, feeling so “high,” which he had never experienced. In the meanwhile, unconsciously his tears were rolling down his cheek, not because he was feeling sad or sorrowful, but because he thought in mind, “What if I would never have this kind of feeling?”

After a journey to the outer space, Murphy was pulled back to the earth. The sun was rising. For people who were in the dark for a long time, light was a nuisance. But it was time to go. Murphy, not quite sober, was still in a trance. He seemed to hear the music playing even if it had stopped for a while and what he saw was still a world with everything imposed by magic. After

saying goodbye to Mark, who looked like a drunkard, Murphy went home on his motor.

On the way home, Murphy tried to keep himself as sober as he could while riding his motor. As he was approaching his home, he began to feel more and more depressed, because everything he saw was what it was supposed to be in a real life—people rushing to work, a

bus crowded like a sardine can and the hustle and bustle of a city life. What an infernal sight to see! It was near a crossing that he felt like falling into a bottomless black hole. To lift his spirits, he sped up to get a feeling of thrill. When passing through a steep slope, he was riding his motor like a pirate ship. But much to his excitement, he was scared out of his wits and lost control of his motor. Into a pillar he bumped. With an expression of seemingly pure ecstasy, he died—of misery.

“I’m sorry. I did not mean to hurt you. But we female are treated so. It is a rule.” Mom said, and I guessed Tom explained all.

Hearing that, I remembered and finally understood the words Henry explained to me. “She was educated so. It’s not her fault. It might not be fair for you, but it isn’t unfair for her.”

Because she was educated so, she practiced Chinese traditional sexism as responsibility. What’s more, because she was treated so, she thought it was normal for me, too. It was not her fault.

I understood, coming to realize the difference between *my fair* and *hers*. I turned to her, giving her a hug. At the very moment, I thought I smelt the fragrance of carnations.



### The Reunion Junior 孫新詠

I am sitting in a fancy restaurant in our town with my best friend, Rosie. We are waiting for those who are trying to find the suitable seats for themselves and those who are still on the road. Today is my class reunion after I’ve graduated from high school for 20 years. Time flies, actually; everyone does change a lot. While I am still sentimentally

soaked in the past, the words of today’s hostess suddenly burst into my ear. “Long time no see, everybody! Thank you all for coming today.....” Then she starts to say some polite formulas with her shrill voice. Oh God, what a torture. I am not a devoted Christian, but sometimes I really believe that Lord can hear my wishes, just like this time He sends me an angel wearing a uniform to save me from falling into the boring hell. “Excuse me. Can I take your orders now?”

Actually, my high school life was not that interesting and memorable. I was not an enthusiastic participant of class activities; I entered no school club, and I didn’t study as hard as those who always sat at the first row. The only thing worth mention is that I became the class leader one semester when I was in my third grade. However, while one semester was not a long period, I still made a mess of it. I lost a Kraft paper bag with all classmates’ tuition inside of it. You might not consider how terrible this event could be for a senior high school student, and I didn’t either. So the only thing I could do was turning to my teacher and my mother for help.

All of these things seem to have happened somewhere in the last century, although for some other people, for example, Rosie, it is not exactly. “I can still remember that you once lost the whole classes’ money! Oh! It happened just like yesterday!” This seems to be the only thing she could remember when we have a reunion, and every year she must mention it or she

won’t sleep well at night. “And do you know what? Our class leader also put her love letter into the same Kraft paper bag! So she also lost the chance having a romance with Michael! Such a pity! Ha-ha.....” Then Rosie would pat on my back and everyone would laugh happily, although I don’t think it’s really a funny story.

Nevertheless, today the most popular topic is not about me, but about Judy, who became a legislator after she

graduated from college. “She appears on TV almost every day. Do you watch the news this morning? She yelled at the mayor again!” One of my classmates says so. “She was the one who always wanted to be in the limelight before, so I’m not surprised that she became a legislator in the end,” another classmate says. At this time I truly, deeply consider that I should contribute to this topic; after all, the famous Judy is the only one who can bring me out of other people’s mind. So I show my opinion without thinking too much, “But sometimes I think the words she said one day are totally different from the other day.” Suddenly everyone bursts into laughter, and all of them say to me with one voice, “Don’t you know what a politician is?”

Just at this moment, the automatic door of the restaurant opens, and a lady wearing a heavy make-up as well as one pair of showy sunglasses walks in. Here comes the famous somebody. “Good evening everyone. I’m so sorry for being late because I have many works to do. And there is too much traffic in this city. I think the government really should learn how to listen to the people’s voice. Any way, do I miss anything interesting? Oh, speaking of interesting things, I just heard a joke from my colleague. Just let me told you. One day.....” Oh dear God, why do you let me fall to the hell again.

I’m not sure how long her speech is because I don’t really pay attention to it, and when I start to be in a trance, a name comes into my mind unexpectedly. That is Michael, the most handsome boy of our school. If I hadn’t lost that love letter, would I have any chance with him? From the first word “hello” to my signature at the end, I used the whole three years to finish that letter. That is the only masterpiece I’ve created in my life, I believe. Anyway, those things just have gone with the wind; my memory, the letter, and of course, a lot of money.

“Excuse me, Miss. Can I take your order?” The waiter’s voice pulls me back to reality. “Can’t you see that I’m talking

with my friends? Please don’t cut into my conversation. If I want to order any meal I’ll call you,” Judy said impatiently. When the waiter gets away from our tables, Judy starts to talk about her opinion toward service industry. “How rude that waiter is! That kind of behavior really pissed me off. By the way, as a legislator, I’m also a member of service industry. I am always a service provider as well as a loyal servant of our people in this country. A legislator should always be honest, humble and gentle just like me. So, if you have any problems about the policy, please tell me. I’ll try my best to solve all the problems for you because as a legislator, all of you are my bosses. Hey, I forget to tell you something.....” I bet all the people present want to stick her mouth with something on hand, but no one really has the courage to do so. “That’s awesome! Have I told you the joke I heard from my colleague yet? One day.....” Not until Judy finishes her words, our hero Rosie stops her with one soft but firm look. “I believe you’ve already told us that joke, Judy.” Judy’s face becomes a little drawn. “Have I? Oops, sorry I totally forget. But as you know, I have many public affairs to cope with, so I become a little forgetful recently.”

At this moment, the clock hanging on the wall dings nine times, and it reminds me something. “It’s about nine o’clock. I’ve promised my son to get home earlier, so just let me excuse myself. It’s really nice to see you guys again, really.” I say so when I get ready to leave my seat. “Wait! Wait!” Judy suddenly pulls my sleeve, yelling and searching something in her big bag. “I almost forget that I have something to give you...” I’m totally confused because I have no idea what that “something” could be. Then she takes out an old Kraft paper bag which really surprises me. “The other day when I was cleaning my house, I found this bag in my drawer. I just cannot remember where I got this bag, but I think there should be some useful things inside of it in the past. Um...well, I am too forgetful to remember that, ha-ha. Anyway, I found

your love letter for Michael in this bag. I am not sure why your love letter appears in my drawer, but I think I should turn it back to you.”

Some strange feelings strongly catch my heart. I believe that Rosie also feels the same way because she gives me a thoughtful glance, and then she looks at Judy, intending to ask something. Nevertheless, Judy continues her speech without giving Rosie any chance to say a word. “I have to apologize for reading your private letter but I have no choice. As a legislator, this is my duty to be honest and tell the truth, so I have to confess my fault to you.” That’s not the point, I think. “Judy,” I ask as calm as I could, “do you remember that I once lost some money in the third grade?” I see Judy freeze at my words as if something hits her head suddenly, and then she smiles artificially, which distorts her face seriously. “I...I don’t remember that. Why do you mention it? As you know, I am very busy and forgetful recently, so how could I remember that someone stole the tuition from you 20 years ago?” In order to avoid any contact with my eyes, Judy looks around busily. “I...I feel hungry now. Where is the waiter?”

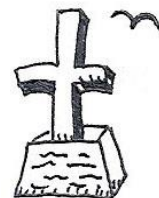
Everyone falls into silence at this moment. It seems that no one knows how to do or what to say next. Then the waiter comes with his professional smile on face, which is like a mock to me. I stand up and leave the restaurant quietly, and now I think I really understand what characteristics a politician should have—honest, humble, and a little bit forgetful.

### Tears

Junior 洪慧珊

There was a call. “Your father is dead.”

She was in shock and could not utter a word or even shed a tear. She rushed to her father’s house. After four hours’ drive, she finally arrived at her father’s home, which was an extremely old single-storied house. It had been a very long time since she left this home. Standing outside,



she could see light blazing in that old house, as if someone was waiting for her already. And through the living room curtains, she could see that there was indeed someone in the living room.

Her uncle was already in the living room when she entered the house. It seemed that her uncle was calm. The girl didn't say anything and neither did her uncle. Silence surrounded them. She desperately dug the memory of her father, trying to find something about her whole family. But she couldn't. She just couldn't. Because the little girl knew that she did not have the so-called "family" at all.

Her uncle told her the way her father died—he was lying alone in his own house, for three days, waiting to be found.

A couple of hours later, a tall man came. He said he would take them to the funeral home. As they drove up to the funeral home, she felt that her stomach was not only in her throat, but that it had actually escaped through her mouth. Her limbs felt as if it was filled with cement. She now opened the car door, crossed the gravel drive and entered a funeral home to view her father's body.

The girl had no idea what happened to her father. It drove her insane. She hated to imagine the scene that he was cold and alone before he died, but she could not control herself. She repeatedly told herself that what was lying now in the coffin was a shell of a man, but just the body happened to be her father's. She was still too stunned to make sense of what she was now feeling. Her stomach was knotted and her hands numb. She heard his footsteps clacking along the cold floor. She slowed the pace. Now she was standing outside the funeral home, feeling her own foot totally numb before the gate.

They were greeted by a tall man with a sympathetic face. It was an expression she knew it couldn't be from his heart. This was business as usual. The girl seemed to hear the voice in his heart saying --*thank you, come again!* She felt a strong antipathy towards him.

*Such a hypocrite!*

*Everyone around me is hypocritical!*

Also, the atmosphere of sadness disgusted her. Was there anyone who was really sad or were they just pretending to be sorry about the death for her?

The coffin was opened by the tall man. Her attention could not be stripped away from his body. Standing there, the girl saw the cold dead man with a terrible expression, which was filled with hopelessness, fear, and loneliness. She saw a teardrop falling from her uncle's cheeks.

She knew that the body would lie forever still in the plain wooden box. Ironically, the little girl's eyes gave him no sign of love or farewell.

She knew he was gone. This was no longer her father. She wanted to cry, but it seemed that her eyes were permanently dry.

*I don't know who I am, nor even what I live for. Why is life so hard?*

She thought that she would feel herself absolutely free; however, she could not sense this kind of freedom. Her face was paler than before. Now as she closed her eyes, none of the shifting images would hold steady in her brain. She still could not remember any happy memory about her father, as the shifting images were played in her mind. It was too messy for her to think of anything. And she did not know why she could not even shed a tear for her father's death. Maybe her heart had become frozen cold since the day her father started to become a crazy alcoholic, and since the day her mother left this family without a goodbye. Or maybe she was too tired to cry. But who cared? Who really cared about her?

She had plunged into the pool of memories.

*Why was my father a crazy alcoholic and my mother, such a cruel woman? Why didn't she take me along the day she went away? Why couldn't I have everything my friends have? Why is my life a tragedy? Why? It's unfair! It is totally unfair!*

A hand touched her shoulder and it was her uncle's.

She was still in the funeral home. For the girl, the rest was a blur yet the time at the funeral home felt like eternity.

She was ashen-faced, lost for a while.

"I can't keep looking back," she murmured.

She could hear herself talking but it wasn't really her. All of a sudden, a great wave fell upon her soul. She shed a tear before she knew it. The tears started to flow out from her eyes. At first she just blubbered quietly. And then she started crying, breaking down and sobbing aloud. Now she howled out louder, letting out her long-year-suffering once and for all. Her tears like cataract of rain flooded the street, drowning her, sinking her into the deep sea of sorrow.....

*It was New Year's Eve. My Dad lifted me onto his shoulders so I could see what I wanted to see in the crowded faces. My Mom was right by my side..... I finally recalled something about my family.*

And now she realized how much she truly needed a big cry to let out her pain, to let everything go. And how much that goodbye was necessary. The death of her father let her realize that she still loved her father, but it was too late to express any feelings to him. It was too late.



**Big Big Dream**  
(Lyrics Inspired by  
Emilia Rydberg's  
*Big Big World*)  
Junior 黃伊婷

I've a big big dream  
In a big big world.  
It's not a big big thing if I feel  
lonely.  
But I do do fear  
That I do do will  
Lose my faith,  
Lose my faith.

In the dark, a single bird's flying,  
Upon the city hovering.  
Under the clouds it's getting  
lost,  
Like the way my mind's lost.

There's a bright birght star  
In the near near north.

It's like a big big smile waving to me.  
But I do do fear  
That it does does might  
Be a lie,  
Be a lie.

Since when for so many times  
I have cried myself to sleep.  
How is the real so cruel?  
How is the cruel so real?

Tear drops drop down  
From the gray gray sky.  
It's been a dim dim world when  
the moon's gone.  
But I do do try  
That I do do wanna  
Find my way,  
Find my way.

I once had a wish flashing by  
Shining like a shooting star,  
But when I almost touched it  
It fell.

I've a big big dream  
In a big big world.  
It's not a big big thing if I feel  
lonely.  
But I do do fear  
That I do do will  
Lose my faith,  
Lose my faith.

I've a big big dream  
In a big big world.  
It's not a big big thing if I feel  
lonely.  
But I do fear  
That I will  
Lose my faith,  
Lose my faith.

**Child**  
Junior 周彙捷

The plumbing is stuck by a  
banana cake.  
The white wall is painted red,  
blue and gray.  
The books are seamed with  
wrinkles,  
Almost break.  
The doll is in want of two hands,  
and a head.

The nanny is always cleaning  
up  
Countless broken glass.  
Daddy is upset about his golf  
club,  
Which is snapped.

Mommy shouts and yells  
With her face turning  
wrinkled and red.

The sounds you create  
Noisy, but memorable  
during a lonely day.  
The picture you made  
Clumsy, but has a childlike  
smell and taste.

The words you say  
Is the most wonderful  
language in the space.  
The smile you gave  
Is one hundred times  
sweeter than crystallized  
chocolates.  
The house is full of warm honey  
air  
Because you are there.

**Skinny Beauty**  
(Inspired by Mika's *Grace Kelly*)  
Junior 林玉書

You wanna change yourself  
(Last time you asked him to  
date,  
He regarded you as a big  
balloon  
You promised him,  
He would beg you to come  
back)

Take away the sweets  
Take away the drinks far from  
my sight



Am I too chubby?  
Am I too tubby?  
Do I fit your code of  
beauty?

Knock off the calories  
Shake of the grease  
Hope I will become sexy  
You will be attracted  
You will be attracted by my  
bewitching boniness

I try to be like top models  
But their bodies are too obese  
So I tried a little Gollum  
I'm gonna be the thinnest of the  
world!

I could be lean  
I could be slim  
I could be skin-and-bones  
I could be slender  
I could be slight  
I could be skinny as a skeleton

Gotta be lovely  
Gotta be dishy  
Gotta be your dream lover  
You'll be hooked on me  
You'll think of me  
You can't help falling in love  
with me

(Don't try to fit others' standard  
of beauty)

Eat less and less  
Drink less and less



Finally get  
anorexia  
Goodbye my  
muscle  
Goodbye my  
flesh  
What I need

are lovely bones  
Why don't you like me?  
Why don't you like me?  
Why do you look at me with  
disdain?  
Should I lose more pounds?  
Should I get into shape to meet  
your aesthetics?

Say what you want to let me  
satisfy you  
But you only spare an  
emotionless cold eye on my  
broken shell

(Girl, You're dying  
Ka-la)



**My Little  
Baby**  
Junior 徐孟瑞

Under the moon, you  
Dance as a gracious lily.  
The clear flowing brook  
Is your  
Naive thought.

Waiting for bloom, you  
Sit as a gallant tulip.  
The gently blowing breeze  
Is your  
Quiet breath.



In the forest, you  
Rollick  
as a  
lovely  
bird.  
The  
long



delicate willow  
Is your  
Curvy hair.

Spreading the scent, you  
Smell as a charming rose.  
The shining stars of sky  
Are your  
Beautiful eyes.

O! My little baby,  
You are my sweet honey.

**Sandglass**  
Junior 賴映蓉

Sand of sandglass is the  
memory.  
Upside belonging to you has  
flew away.  
As the years roll by ceaselessly,  
Underside is mine, and brighter  
day by day.

Approaching the grave,  
You forget by degrees.  
Hardly can I conceive of  
The memory only I possess.

Time flew, and sand flowed.

The early morning in summer,  
I beheld a busy figure.  
The purple grapes hung there,  
And I ran far and near.

Time crept, and sand crinkled.

The droning fan,  
The sunken moon,  
The sleepy girl,  
The memorable all,

Oh! All and all and all  
You forget, forgot, and  
forgotten.

At length, alone I am left  
With the memory, and I drift.

Quietly slip away the years.  
Still the sandglass rustles.

### Across the Universe

Junior 劉侃靈

In motion, the universe  
Continues to be.  
Arm in arm, the planets  
embrace  
Peacefully the orbital.  
Some meteors,  
All of a sudden,  
Rush to me.  
It reminds me  
Of my unfulfilled wishes  
In those years.

For a moment, I wish  
I can escape from the  
limitations  
Imposed by space and time,  
Since for me,



The dots they  
interweave  
Are too heavy to  
burden.

Madly  
The orders  
And

The moods  
I suspect  
Both laugh at me;  
Miserably,  
With nothing  
I can fight back.  
I can't help  
Wondering  
How  
Misfortunate people  
Become lucky,  
And hence,  
With no regrets  
Live to the end of  
their lives.



### Cuckoo and Crocodil

e  
Junior 孫新詠

genius and stretched his  
feather.

Heavenly high he fly,  
Through the velvet sky.  
The cuckoo landed softly in the  
middle of the river.

He ate the juicy cherry;  
Red liquid down the throat.  
So sweet, yummy, and  
beautiful.  
Bravo! Bravo! Bravo!

Creeping slowly on the bank a  
crocodile came.

This being was cold-blooded  
but wasn't tame.

He saw the feather so dear,  
And dropped crocodile's tear.  
Taking care of his dinner was  
anything but a game.

He ate the juicy creature;  
Red liquid down the throat.  
So sweet, yummy, and  
b

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uti  
ful

Bravo! Bravo! Bravo!



### Rest in Peace

Junior 林玉書

The withered woods beset the  
town,  
And spread the aura, death and  
down.  
The fertile land was decayed by



A cuckoo stole a  
cherry from the  
garden of a farmer.  
He deemed he's a



cracks,  
Only leaving the lingering wails  
on racks.

Defaced ruins mourn and cry;  
No hope survives but chains  
and a sigh.  
A child, he bends and prays for  
free;  
A vulture lurks to ransom him.

His forehead pressing  
The lifeless ground,  
The child feels the remaining  
Soul can no longer be found.  
“I squat here devoutly  
To wait for thee,  
The guide I beg piteously  
To save me  
To end my story  
In the purgatory.”

The vulture speaks with eyes  
kind  
And voice soft and gentle,  
As if comforting the beastie  
Whose mind is fearful.  
“I will guard you  
Till your last breath;  
My child, now you  
Can rest in peace.”

### The Politician Junior 矢口惠理

He was born in an upper class  
family. His father  
Was a member of Cabinet, who  
was widely  
admired.  
And his mother was the  
daughter of a wealthy  
entrepreneur.  
He got the best education and  
treatment during childhood.  
Then, he entered  
A prestigious university with  
excellent scores, and he  
double majored in  
Law and Politics. Everyone  
envied him and wanted to  
become his kin.

On graduating from university,  
he joined the same political  
Party with his father. The first

job for him was the secretary  
of a  
famous  
Diet  
member.  
He was a  
perfect  
secretary.  
He  
covered up  
every  
piece  
of  
scandal  
In any  
way  
he  
can  
for  
maintaining favorable public  
image of that lawmaker.

Because of his efforts, the  
official asked him to run for  
the coming election  
Of Diet. Meanwhile, he got  
married to the girl whose  
father owned a big  
corporation.



After winning  
election, he  
became an excellent  
politician. He treated  
Everyone friendly at least in the  
surface. He refused to  
receive  
Any bribe unless it was up to  
ten million. Thus, people  
loved him and voted  
For him in every election. He  
was also a great father. He  
gave  
His wife and three children  
everything they wanted  
except love. He devoted  
over  
Half his life on politics and also  
gained huge amount of  
money and big power.

Was he successful? Was he  
admirable? The question is

farcical.



If anything had gone wrong, we  
should surely have heard his  
scandal.