

Newsletter

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Lyric Lyric

Squash

by 黎裕元

Lyrics modeling on *The goo goo dolls'* song
"Smash"

Hey
Why are you frowning
I want to stretch your face

Wait
Now you're giving up
Gaining anymore pounds

Every time I see you
Lying on the scale
You're thin
You're thin that can't break it down

Squash
I know you're sighing
Seven times this year
Slash
'Cause now you're trying'
Getting through these pangs

Every time I see you
Bulking up yourself
I delight
I delight that you become round

Every time I see you
Laughing ear to ear
I know
I know you can make me proud

I see you're standing in the yard right now
You're getting big, reddish, and mature enough
I can't wait to make you a lamp right now

Squash
You're a pumpkin
Squash
You're my daring
Squash
You're Halloween
Right now



The original words

Artist: *Goo Goo Dolls*

Song: *Smash*

Hey
What are you thinking
I tried to reach your face

Say
See what you're thinking
Don't carry around that pain

Every time I see you
Picking at yourself
I love
I love when things worked out

Smash
I heard you crying
Seven times this year
Crash
'Cause now you're smiling
Holding back those tears

Every time I see you
Picking at yourself
I love
I love when things worked out

Every time I see you
Torturing yourself
I love
I love when things worked out

I see it from another place right now
I'm coming home before I hit the ground
Run fast there I wanna be gone now

Smash
And I feel it
Smash
And I feel it
Smash
And I feel it
Right now

What does little Barbie Say?

by 徐偉倫

What does little Barbie say?
In a salon before coming of a date?
Let me go, says little Barbie,
Barber, let me go away,
Barbie, hold little longer,
Till your hair is curvier,
So she holds a little longer,
Then she rushes away.

(Inspired by Alfred Tennyson's "作品名")

Poetry Poetry

Counting Fingers

by 王弈潔

...two, three, four...
Wrinkled hands, rugged fingers, swollen
knuckles
It's my grandma that I saw
Counting fingers with five circles.
...six, seven, eight...
How forceful these wearied hands
Impel million years away.
Yet
...eight, seven, six...
Rosy cheeks, limpid eyes, pursed lips
She remembers when she was a child
Counting fingers in the sugar cane field.
...a, i, u, e, o...
Time, retreating.
Memory, retrieving.

Dancing Leaves

by 蔡慧君

Wind invites.
Dance the leaves.
Gently they whisper the sweetness of vitality.
Sprightly they spin with the flow of fantasy.
Freely they fly with the wings of melody.
Like the floating waves of her tutu,
When the ballerina spins on her tiptoe.
Maybe on the leaves,
The mischievous fairies
Are roaming,
Without thinking
Of the purpose of this dancing.



Waiting

by 廖良慧

Strolling through the ground
Crossing through the crowd
Couples and lovers all around

Lovebirds fly in the sky
Couples keep passing by
I doubt I'll ever meet that guy

In the groups staying
With my friends laughing
Not alone but a lonely heart aching

Solitude grows, spreads, fills in mind
Desolation lurks, invades, floods inside

Find someone to know me?
Meet someone to love me?
How to end this suffering?

Dew drops, sky glows, owl sings
Still waiting
Bud grows, leaf falls, rose wilts
Still hoping
Till the light of my life burns out
Till the water of the ocean dries up

Life might end, but waiting shall not.

Novel
Novel

A Sunny Afternoon

by 郭辰昕

It's a shiny sunny day. The sun is smiling. The wind is singing. The clouds are dancing. And little Johnny is playing with his lovely doggy in the yard. In an orange peaked cap, he looks cuter and more cheery. Little Johnny's lovely doggy is called Pin. Pin is a brisk Dalmatian with brown spots. The yard around the house is full of Mom's favorite shrubs. The green shrubs are prettified with colors of flowers. Right in the backyard is a small fruit tree. There are only some small white flowers on it during this hot summer time. Now little Johnny and Pin are keeping a close watch on a green big-eyed frog under the fruit tree. All of them stay still for minutes as if time stops. All of a sudden, little Johnny and his Pin are suddenly throwing themselves on the frog at the same time.

"Bang!!" The cute frog jumps away agilely just before little Johnny and Pin bump their heads against each other. Instead of crying, Johnny and Pin are rolling on the grasslands with laughs. The warm wind is blowing softly on little Johnny's pink cheeks. He holds Pin in his arms

with a yawn. In the shadow of the tree, they close their eyes slowly and unconsciously. It's really a free sunny day.

"Johnny, time for lunch," stepping out of the kitchen, Mom calls her little son. However, no one answers. "Johnny! It's lunch time." Mom says again while taking off the apron. Again, no one answers. Then, Mom climbs the stairs and calls, "Johnny, where are you?" Meanwhile, no one answers. "Johnny, are you here?" Mom asks when knocking the door of Johnny's bedroom. Uh.....no one answers. Mom starts to feel nervous. She quickly opens the door. There is no one there. Everything is normal. The bed is clean. The bookcase is clean, too. And little Johnny's favorite model is still on the desk. Mom begins to worry.

Rushing out of the house in a flurry, Mom bumps into Mrs. Jones. She is a 67-year-old woman who lives with her husband next door. Their children, Fred and Ted, are working in the city.

"Where is little Johnny?" Mom asks just as Mrs. Jones wants to say hello to her.

"I haven't seen cute little Johnny today." After thinking for a while, Mrs. Jones says slowly. "You mean that little Johnny is not home? What a pity. I am going to let him have a taste of the cake I baked this morning." As soon as Mom wants to explain that Johnny is not only out but has also disappeared, Mrs. Jones shout in a sudden, "Don't tell me that little Johnny disappears!" There is a slight quiver in her voice as she speaks.

"Honey! Little Johnny is lost! What can I do? My little Johnny is lost," Mrs. Jones turns back to her house and shouts to her husband.

"Could you..." Mom is interrupted by the bump when Mrs. Jones closes the door hastily.

"Oh! How can I find my son?" Mom whispers and walks as fast as possible to the nearest police station. After a corner, Mom sees a man in black uniform riding a bicycle toward her. He's a police officer! Mom almost cries.

She runs to him and says, "I lost my little son. May I ask you a favor..." Mom is interrupted one more time when the police officer speaks in a cold voice.

"What's his name?"

"Johnny. His name is Johnny." Mom replies quickly and nervously.

"When is he lost?"

"Just a few minutes ago when I called him for lunch."

"Where?"

"I'm not sure. I think he was playing in his room but ..." Mom tries hard to remember what happened this morning.

"OK. I've already understood the whole situation. Now the only thing you have to do is to stay home waiting for good news," suddenly the police officer breaks into Mom's talk in a colder

voice and then rides back to where he came by bicycle.

"Holy cow! Is there no one who can help me?" Mom cries in her mind, "Where is my little Johnny?"

Mom looks absent-minded and walks absent-mindedly. She is eager to find her little Johnny; however, she has no idea about what to do. She just walks and walks. She never stops until a voice flashes through her.

"It's such a hot day. It's too hot for people to go out. It's the reason why I don't earn a lot of money today. It's the hateful weather's fault!" Mr. Smith, the shopkeeper, is talking to himself as usual.

Mom suddenly finds out that it's the store Johnny often goes to because there are many kinds of delicious candies. "Mr. Smith, do you know where little Johnny is?" Mom asks in a hopeful voice.

"Little Johnny? There are too many little Johnnys. Which one do you mean? The one with red dirty hair, the one living on the top of the mountain or the one who doesn't exit in fact? If you mean the mischievous one who lives on the mountain, I can tell you that I haven't seen him for many days. And moreover, I don't want to see him anymore. He is the worst boy that I have ever seen. He broke my window with a baseball several days ago." Mr. Smith talks too fluently and endlessly for Mom to break into his soliloquy.

Mom leaves the grocery as soon as she can. She can't waste time to listen to his meaningless talk because the sun is setting.

"God bless my little Johnny." Mom is standing on the stream in the village where she and her little Johnny live and she prays in her mind. In the water is the reflection of the sun. It is so red that she feels her heart bleeding. Several ducks swim in front of her.

"Could you tell me where my little Johnny is?" Mom asks in a weak and despair voice.

"Crack! Crack!" is the only sound a duck can deliver.

The sun almost sets and Mom's heart is almost broken, too.



Suddenly a thought flashes through her head. Mom runs as fast as if there is a lion running after her. Although she is tired physically and mentally, she still makes great effort to run fast. The evening wind is a little cool but Mom doesn't notice it at all. Gradually the house shows up in Mom's eyes. It's closer and closer. Instead of rushing into the house immediately, Mom runs to

the yard. In the moonlight Mom sees a dark shadow moving.

“Wow, wow, wow.” It’s Pin!

After Pin, Mom finds her little Johnny sleeping soundly under the fruit tree. She quickly goes toward Johnny and holds him tightly in her arms as if he is going to disappear. “God bless!” Mom whispers.

“Mommy, are you crying?” Little Johnny is awake.

“No. Nothing.” Mom wipes her tears and says, “Let’s go in for dinner.”

This night Mom is very angry with herself.

“How could I forget I told Johnny to play with Pin in the yard till I finished cooking!”



Catching the Bus

by 蔡慧君

“The terminal station. Thank you for your patronage,” said the familiar mechanical voice from the speaker above. The heavy silence mixed with drowsiness permeating the stuffy limited space in the past five minutes was broken. People started to flood to the door with eagerness. Hearing the holy summon, those who sat rooted to their seats jumped up to their feet immediately as if a hidden nail suddenly popped up and stung them. It looked like the train was a jail, and the passengers were the prisoners longing for freedom, which was only a step away outside the door. The train finally steadied itself and arrived exactly at where it ought to stop. The passengers were like ambitious competitors hungry for the first prize in a 100-meter race. “Ready, set, go!” As soon as the door opened, people rushed out in the direction of the escalator. A glimpse of smirk flashed from the winner’s face; he seemed to immerse in the sweetness of victory.

A boy was with his mother. He didn’t want to run, but he was forced to stride quickly to catch his mother’s speed. “Hurry up, sweetheart, or we’ll miss the bus,” said the mother without looking at him. “Mummy, I am already at top speed,” objected the boy. Nevertheless, knowing that his mother wasn’t paying any attention to him, all the boy could do was run and run and run. It usually took them five minutes, sometimes even longer, to get to the bus stop for they would stop by some shops. However, to the boy’s surprise, they only spent three minutes this time. It was 7: 05 P.M.

There was already a long line of people waiting for the bus. It was about dinner time. Students after school and people after work were eager to go home. As the boy stopped running, the freezing night air, which he didn’t feel while running, penetrated his rather thin sweater and made him shiver. The hot air he exhaled from his

mouth combined with the cold air turned into a puff of white mist. Pleased to see the mist, he gave out more puffs. Near the bus stop was a delicately-designed chain store. The clerk was trying his best to attract customers by advertising the tempting discount offered in the sale. Though some people in the line looked attracted, they remained still because the desire of getting on the bus conquered everything. Some were gazing aimlessly into the air, and others were reading newspapers, magazines, or books to kill time; however, they were not concentrated on what they were reading at all. A man held a book in his right hand. He read a few lines, looked up, and then checked his watch even though he just did a few seconds ago. He read a few lines again with his left hand brushing through his untidy hair absent-mindedly. But he seemed totally oblivious that it was another page for the wind kindly saved him the trouble.

Time was like an old lady walking across the street. She walked so slowly that she couldn’t cross the street before the traffic light turned red. But the drivers, feeling impatient, had to wait for her patiently. After having waited for fifteen minutes, which was like a century long, the boy suffered from hunger and cold. He couldn’t figure out why his mother didn’t want to take the bus from where they got on the MRT. Why do they bother to stand in the cold to wait for the bus here? He felt so tired and bored that he didn’t want to think about the questions swirling in his head. His sore legs needed a rest desperately. From a distance, they saw the bus coming. “Thanks god,” murmured some people. As the bus drew nearer, the relieved expression on their faces disappeared. The boy saw her mother frown, which usually happened when he did something wrong. “No! Half the seats are occupied. We may not have seats,” said the boy’s mother, “Anyway, it’s fine as long as we can get home as soon as possible.”



Three, two, one, the three lucky passengers were awarded the last three seats. Then the bus driver said coldly, “No more seats. Wait for the next bus.” The one standing at the door argued with the driver indignantly, “I’ve been standing here for twenty minutes. Now you tell me to wait for another twenty minutes. No, I insist to take this one.” “Sorry, that’s the regulation. I will be fined NT 3,000 dollars if I let you get on the bus.

Unless you’re willing to pay the penalty for me,” replied the driver, annoyed. He had been under this kind of situations for several times. Though he was compassionate with the passengers, he couldn’t help them. He thought in mind that sometimes being selfish is necessary. He closed the door determinedly, and drove away. What left behind was the complaint and discontent he couldn’t deal with. The driver recalled that one time he decided to take a chance, so he took more passengers. A few weeks later, he got the NT 3,000 dollar traffic ticket.

“Come on, let’s go to another stop. There won’t be so many people,” whispered the mother in the boy’s ears. When she took her son’s hand, the exhausted expression on her face immediately turned into a worried one. Even though her teeth were chattering violently because of the cold, she took off her scarf and put it on her son. A taxi driver greeted them graciously by boasting the warm and comfortable atmosphere filled in his car. She noticed the weariness on her son’s face, which made her frown again; however, she couldn’t help reminding herself of the necessity of saving money. Taking her son’s hand, she took a firm step toward their destination.

While running, they bumped into someone; nevertheless, she didn’t have time to apologize sincerely for her rudeness. She panted out a quick “sorry.” Not having time to take a look, she didn’t even know whether that someone was a man or a woman. What followed was a noise of things dropping down to the ground. The angry cry from their victim decreased behind them.

In haste, they arrived at another stop. There were only three people. “We definitely will get on the next bus,” said the mother confidently. Her fatigue seemed to be consoled. “Mummy, why didn’t you speak louder to me? That tickled my ear. I couldn’t hear you clearly,” asked the boy. “There are still so many people at that stop, if I had told you loudly, they would have heard and followed us to this stop. We can’t take any chance,” replied the mother. “But Mummy, you always teach me to help others. Shouldn’t we help them?” asked the boy again. “Yes. But there’s always some exception. You will understand when you grow up,” replied the mother. “Mummy...” asked the boy again. “Why do you have so many questions?” interrupted the mother angrily. “I saw the bus we had taken last week at where we got on the MRT. Why do we come here?” asked the boy timidly, daring not look at his mother. “Well, this bus saves us time. It is much faster than other buses. That’s why it’s so popular. If we had taken the bus we missed, we would have been home. I thought we could Here comes the bus,” said the mother without looking at her son. It was 7: 40 P.M.



Fatal Innocence

by 廖良慧

At night there was a party in the hall. Dressed up formally, people scattered around and enjoyed themselves. Some were dancing elegantly, and some were talking or exchanging toasts joyfully. But others seemed to silently enjoy their food—the blood. The red and lustrous liquid in the wineglasses was not the wine actually, but warm blood which was flowing in humans' veins just a moment ago. Yes, this party was nothing but a feast—for vampires to enjoy their food and the pleasure of hunting.

Bewildered by the beauty of vampires, most humans forgot to resist, but became their prey and food. But it would not be Enid because she was the chosen one to be one of the vampires, their companion, not their food—she thought. Yes, she was the exception of those humans, the one who was standing behind the curtains, silently watching everything. She was immersed in her thought, so attentively that she did not notice that someone had approached her quietly. Suddenly, someone clapped her on the shoulder. She was startled and wanted to run away at once, but that hand grabbed her by the arm.

“Wake up! Enid. It's me, Sophia,” said Sophia.

Enid pulled back her thought, tried to be calm, then she looked at her friend.

“Sorry for scarring you, but you really should come to join us, not just standing here and pondering,” said Sophia with a sigh in her mind because from Enid's appearance, Sophia knew Enid had had her fancy again—about some ridiculous vampires. As Enid's best friend, Sophia exactly knew what Enid was thinking.

“I know, but I'm a little bit tired. I don't want to dance at all. Go, enjoy yourself. Don't worry about me,” Enid answered and pushed Sophia back to the crowd.

“Alright...but you look pale. Perhaps you should go to the balcony to have some fresh air.”

“I will...thanks.” Enid smiled as approval of Sophia's suggestion and waved her goodbye. Looking around, then Enid left for the nearest balcony.

Sophia was right; she did need some fresh air. The strong smell of blood filled in the hall made her giddy. She also felt desolate. Crowds of vampires were in the hall; however, it seemed that no one was the one she searched for and no one understood her desire to be one of them. The more times she joined a party, the more loneliness came to her mind. No matter how chilly the wind was, it still could not compete with the coldness in her heart.

“The wind might be chilly, but it still cannot compete with the coldness of man's heart, right?”

A euphonic voice suddenly came behind Enid. Turning around, Enid goggled at the man. The man glimpsed at Enid, then looked up at the inky sky. “Immortality might be admiring, but the longer you live, the longer your suffering of loneliness will be. Not everyone can meet one's destined partner, you should know.”

“Immortality? Destined partner? The ability to read my mind? He couldn't be...” Enid thought in astonishment. Staring at the man, she found that he had a charming appearance. His skin was very smooth as if it was sculpted in marbles and his face was utterly white as if he had been bleached. It was also as seemingly inanimate as a statue, except for the two brilliant green eyes glistening like flames.

“Well, sorry for interrupting your thought. Have a wonderful night, my fair lady,” said the man with a light smile. Turning around, he looked like going to leave.

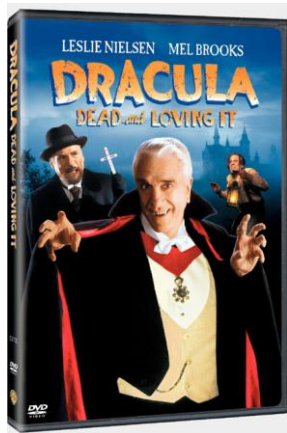
Without thinking, Enid called out. “Wait! Will we meet again? I mean, uh...I'm interested in what you had said. Would you mind leaving me your address? Maybe I can visit you someday to have a chat with you,” Enid spoke hastily.

“Are you always so aggressive when facing males?” the man responded.

Hearing that, Enid flushed immediately without knowing how to react. Seeing the blush on her cheeks, the man smiled.

“Sorry, no offense. But I do not live in a regular place. If you insist to know, I can only tell you that I will head for London later. After tonight, I think we won't see each other again, but...maybe that is better for both of us.” Then the man left.

Enid stood there, thinking about what the man had said, delighted by meeting a vampire who understood the suffering of loneliness and who was searching for his companion as well. “Yes, he was exactly the one I had searched for my whole life,” Enid thought. With great joy Enid trotted to the railings of the balcony, and wanted to announce to the world that she finally met him. But suddenly she stumbled on something at her feet. That was a pot of plant. Enid didn't know what kind of plant it was, but she noticed that there was a cocoon attached to the branch.



The cocoon was shaking and there seemed to be something inside struggling and trying to get out. Enid crouched down and watched attentively. The cocoon shook more and more severely. The creature inside seemed to exert all

its strength to force its way out. Suddenly, the cocoon cracked; a moth showed up. Staying still for a while, hanging upside down to harden its wings, spreading them out to dry, soon the moth flapped its wings and flew away.

“Go! Fly as far as you can! Enjoy your new life well!” Enid shouted cheerfully.

“I am glad you look happy and energetic now.” Sophia showed up with her hands holding two glasses of red liquid.

“Yeah...your suggestion is right. I feel better now, thanks.” Away from the bloody feast, conversing with an attracting vampire and feeling the joy of a newborn life did cheer Enid up.

“It was my pleasure,” Sophia smiled, “Come on, have some drinks. I believe you must be thirsty.” Sophia handed one of the glasses to Enid.

At the sight of the cardinal liquid in the glass, a strong disgust swept over her. “Take it away from me! I won't drink that as long as I'm still human.” Enid waved away Sophia's hand fiercely. The glass dropped on the floor and shattered into pieces.

“Are you out of your mind? This is the red wine, not some disgusting blood!”

“Sorry! Sophia. I don't mean to do it...” Enid murmured.

“No! I've had it enough. Enid, stop fancying and face the truth. You live in the reality; there is no vampire on earth at all!”

“No, Sophia, vampires do exist! I had seen one of them just before you came.” Yes, she did see a vampire who was searching for his companion, just like she did.

“No, Enid. That is just your illusion. Be realistic!”

“Why don't you believe me? Sophia...Fine, I will prove it to you,” Enid roared and rushed out of the party immediately.

“Wait! Enid, come back. Don't go to find some dangerous men that you are not familiar with...Enid, your innocence will kill you!”

Running on the street, Enid decided to go to find the man she met on the balcony right away. She kept running, and hoped to catch the sight of him. Shortly Enid saw there was someone standing by the streetlight and waiting. She hastened her steps and wanted to see the man's face more clearly, but she tripped over something and fell. At the moment she nearly fell down on the road, a vigorous hand grabbed her by her arm, and pulled her back into the chest. “It was as cold as the statue without any warmth,” Enid thought, as her face touched the man's chest.

“You come to me at last...” the man uttered. “It was he!” Enid gazed at the man joyfully. “I told you it is better for both of us not to see each other again. Since you don't take my advice, now is the time you have to pay.” Before Enid understood what the man had said, he had gone into her neck. Enid just felt a prickle on her neck,

then the whole blood in her body seemed to surge towards the spot bit by the man.



Enid was too shock to think, but strangely enough she did not have the idea to resist at all. Her mind was completely blank. She could not do anything, but just lean on the man weakly and feel her gradual faintness. After a while, the man raised his head and said. “You *are* the chosen one, but to be my food, not my companion. Giving up your naïve thought might save you; you should know that...but...” the man paused and gazed at Enid, “I’m sorry, but you earn it yourself...” Finishing his words, the man buried his head in Enid’s neck more deeply.

Before long, Enid felt that she was going to lose her consciousness. Out of instinct, she raised her head strenuously and wanted to look at the last and only light visible to her. With a dim sight Enid saw a moth attracted to the halo of the streetlamp. Circling around the light, the moth kept banging on the lamp desperately. Finally, its wings stopped flapping and the moth dropped to the ground slowly.



Who Cares?

by 汪欣儀

To the west of Missouri River, there was a small and secluded village. On the south edge of the village, there were three houses. Mrs. Shepherd was the householder of one of them. She was an old widow.

It was a Sunday morning in beautiful May. When the whole village was still asleep, Mrs. Shepherd woke up to prepare breakfast. She did not always wake up so early. Because she lived alone, no one would mind if she forgot to prepare breakfast. But her son and his family were here this day. Mrs. Shepherd was quite busy but happy. “Hey, wake up.” Mrs. Shepherd called out. “Come on. I have prepared breakfast for you.” Matt Shepherd and his wife, Karen, stepped into the dining room and sat down. Then their daughters, Natalie and Holly, came in. “My dear, come and sit here with me.” Mrs. Shepherd said.

It was a nice breakfast. But after breakfast, Matt Shepherd and his wife and children have to leave right away. “We should set off right now. We must arrive home before lunch, Mom.” Matt said. “I know, I know. You told me last night. I

remember.” Her voice sounded a little bit disappointed. But she still kept smiles on her face. “Hurry up. We have no time.” Matt had already stood in the door and urged. “Sorry we can’t go to church with you this time,” Karen took her bag. “We will come back to see you some other day. Don’t forget to take medicine.” “Bye Mom.” “Bye grandma.”

After Matt and his family left, Mrs. Shepherd’s house became quiet as usual. She walked to the window; gazed at the path in front of her house, and pondered.

Dingdong, dingdong...

The bell of church caught Mrs. Shepherd’s attention. “Ah, it’s time to go to church.” “Hey! Holly! Natalie! Let’s go...” Mrs. Shepherd turned her head and was immediately aware that she was the only person in this house now. She put on her coat and wool hat silently. “Coat, gloves, hat and...” she murmured to herself, “and glasses! Oh! Where are my glasses?” She spent about 20 minutes searching for them and finally found that the glasses are right on her face. When she stepped into the church, the service had begun for five minutes.



Mrs. Shepherd quietly took a seat in the corner near the door. She always sat there. It was not because she was late all the time, but she loved to keep a distance with other people. People in the church noticed that someone was late, but no one turned his head. Nobody wanted to pay attention to her. And fortunately, that was what Mrs. Shepherd hoped, too.

The church service was boring. Time seemed to go slowly. After the aged priest finished his speech and people recited chant, the service was over eventually. Mrs. Shepherd breathed a sigh of relief. She stood up and was going to leave. “Help! Help!” Somebody ran in the church and shouted. “A house is on fire.” People in the church all rushed to the door to see what happened. Mrs. Shepherd stood in the door and looked towards south. Then she was stunned. “Oh! GOD! It can’t be,” she cried. “That is my house!” Now every one turned and looked at her. She was panic-stricken and rushed towards the house.

When poor Mrs. Shepherd stood in front of her house, all she can see was black ashes. The smell of burnt filled the air. The fire had been quenched, but the whole building was ruined. Mrs. Shepherd faltered toward her house.

“Everything is gone.” She fell down and sat on the ground. “It is gone.” She broke down and sobbed aloud.

At this time, all habitants in the village had gathered here. A young police man patted Mrs. Shepherd on the shoulder. “I’m really sorry,” he said. “Please accept the accident, Madam.” Mrs. Shepherd covered her face with her hands and cried. “Well. I know your feeling, Madam. But I have to ask you something. Are you the host of this house? Who else live with you?” But Mrs. Shepherd just kept crying and answered nothing. The police man turned to the crowd and asked loudly, “Is there anyone who knows about her family?” No one answered. “Nobody knows? OK! And what’s her name?” All the people kept silent and looked at each other. The police scratched his head and said, “Is there really NO ONE that knows anything about this Madam?”

“Shepherd, Miranda Shepherd,” Mrs. Shepherd said lightly. Her voice was very nasal. “I live here alone. My son and his family live in a city about 160 kilometers north of here.” Hearing the words, the young police man smiled as if he was saved by goddess. “It’s great. Then could you tell me how to get in contact with them?” he said.



About two hours later, Matt Shepherd and his family came back to the village. When Matt and Karen arrived at the scene, People whispered to each other. “Look! They are those unfilial son and daughter.” “Yeah. They left their old mother and moved to big city.” “They live in a big and beautiful house in that city but let their mother live in such a small and dilapidated wooden house.”

Matt heard exactly all the whispers but he didn’t mind it. He passed through the crowd and saw his mother. She still sat there and didn’t want to leave the house. The young police seemed glad to see Mrs. Shepherd’s family come. But he looked angry at the same time. He walked to Matt and his wife, and yelled at them. “Why do you come back so late? Don’t you know how pathetic your old mother is?” Mrs. Shepherd sobbed. “Mom, don’t...” Matt turned to his mother. But she just sat on the black ashes, held a black pot, and cried. “Oh, my favorite pot...”

“Don’t make any excuse for your deeds.” An old man said angrily.

“You can’t let your mother live here alone and be indifferent to her.”

“I don’t...” Matt uttered.

“Look at your suit and dress. You must be a rich man, right? And you just give your mother an old house to live. How un-filial you are!”

“Hey, please. I just left...” Matt tried to explain.

“You should feel ashamed of it. You know?”

“Young guy,” the aged priest finally uttered

in a gentle voice, “when children grow up, they have to leave home and fight for their own lives. It’s good. We all know it.” The priest said. “But you shouldn’t forget your parents. You have to show your concern.”

“We know, sir,” Karen said.

“I know maybe you are quite busy with your work, but you still can spare time to visit your mother.”

“Yes, I agree with our priest,” a fat woman said, “I’ve never seen you come back here to call on your Mom.”

“Sorry Madam. But in fact we did.”

“We know what you want to say. Let’s forget the fire disaster. Just look at your mother. How thin and weak she is,” a young and pretty girl said. Tears filled her eyes.

“Oh! GOD!” Matt felt really tired and could hardly control his temper now. “It’s ridiculous!” He murmured and walked to Mrs. Shepherd. “Mom, let’s not stay here, ok? You’ll catch cold. Let’s go back home.”

“Hey, come on. Natalie, Holly,” Karen said, “Go to help grandma.”

“That’s right.” The police ran to them. “Take your mother home and live together. That’s what you have to do. But before you leave there, I think you should...”

“What do you want me to do, sir?” Matt thought that he couldn’t be patient any more.

“Uh... just make a record about... about how...” He wanted to know details about how much Mrs. Shepherd had lost in this event. But his question was interrupted by Natalie.

“Grandma.” Natalie ran to old Mrs. Shepherd and said cheerfully, “I want to eat those apple pies you made this morning. Just go home now.”

“I beg your pardon.” The young policeman seemed getting confused now. “Why do you said just go home now and eat pies? Your grandmother’s house had been burned.”

“NO! Grandma’s house hadn’t been burned. It is just over there.” Holly pointed the brick house which is just two doors away. “Look! That one.”

“Ah! Is that my house?” Mrs. Shepherd seemed bewildered, and then laughed suddenly. “That’s right. It’s my house.”

People stopped whispering or scolding. Now they tried to digest the meaning of these words. “You mean...”

“That’s right.” Matt took a deep breath and said slowly. “This is not our home, and that one is.”

“Oh! Yes. Yes. Just go home. Go home and have a piece of apple pie.” Mrs. Shepherd walked towards her house slowly with Natalie and Holly.

Karen turned to those dumbstruck villagers and said, “Our mother is a patient of amnesia.” Karen was glad that she finally had a chance to explain. “She is puzzle headed sometimes. We

are sorry to make a misunderstanding just because you don’t know that.”

“But... Who is the real owner of THIS house?” Someone in the crowd asked. No one answered. No one knew.

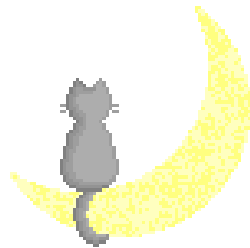


A Bunch of Daffodils

by 王奔潔

When the last patch of orange sky was devoured by night, the moon came out.

I saw a little girl holding a bunch of daffodils softly in her arms, walking hastily on a narrow trail meandering up a small hill. The night wind was somewhat chilly. The little girl seemed to heed nothing about her thin cloth, but the way home. The sweet night was embraced by a gentle silence. Nothing was heard but the whispering wind. The little girl walked hastily yet steadily without making a sound, just like most little girls would do in a graceful manner. Because of the dim moonlight, it was hard for me to discern what the little girl looked like, nor what she wore. But it was roughly known that a cheerful expression was glowing on her face.



Those daffodils were from a nearby lake below the hill. “It must have been just picked as a gift on this very Valentine’s Day,” I thought to myself. A sweet fragrance was brought by the chilly wind. Yet it was hard for me to distinguish whether it came from the daffodils or simply the freshness of a country night. For both of these seemed to be mixed in an unusual harmony.

One of her red shoes was lost on her way home, though she did not know when or where she lost it. She just kept on walking and walking without stopping. She was so eager to bring the bunch of daffodils home. She was so eager to see the beloved face of her mom. She was so eager to be hugged tightly in those loving arms. Her enthusiasm almost took her breath away.

Darkness invaded. The night was getting deeper and deeper, exerting a lethargic charm on all creatures. The moonlight was flicking behind the wandering clouds, casting patchy shadows of foliage on the trail. But the little girl seemed to be afraid of nothing. She was so attentive to her own happy thoughts that she ignored the ominous atmosphere around her.

She is a brave girl. It is love that gave her courage.

A small cottage was getting larger and larger in her eyes. She drew nearer to her home. Standing on the doorstep, she knocked the door

with great efforts. Her hands were too weak to let anyone hear her.

I was a solitary, homeless traveler without any companion. Out of curiosity and tiredness, I was tailing along the little girl, hoping to find a place to stay for the night. When I saw her standing before the door without receiving any answer, I took my chance to knock the door for her.

I knocked the door for her with a helping smile. The little girl only remained silent behind me without answering. I supposed I would receive a warm hospitality from her mother when that bunch of daffodils promised her a pleasant mood. After a while, the door was slightly opened. The light pouring from the door was stabbing like a spear. I squinted through the door for my eyes had been used to the dim moonlight.

“Who are you?” sobbed a woman with a low voice. Her eyes were all red with weeping.

Her unexpected grief-worn face stunned me. “I...”

Out of embarrassment, I avoided her gaze and cast a glance into the house. I saw something covered with a white, wet sheet. Two little feet were revealed. With only one red shoe, the little feet lied coldly and palely on the floor.

My heart twisted. Tentatively, I slowly turned my head to see the little girl behind me. I saw nothing. Only the fragrance of daffodils lingered, murmuring in the soft whisper of chilly wind.



Announcement Announcement

Activities in December



- | | |
|----------|--|
| 12/4 | Drama contest
(among Departments) |
| 12/19 | Country dance contest
(among Departments) |
| 12/19-23 | FLAL Week |
| 12/19 | Flea Market |
| 12/20 | Eating Contest |
| 12/21 | Roleplay |
| 12/22 | Dodgeball Contest |
| 12/23 | Christmas Party |

