

*Blossom stories
in
The city of Bauhinia*

cover designed by stacy garcia

Lingnan University Literary Journal 2019

2018-2019

*Bauhinia
Rhapsody*



Lingnan University Literary Journal

Bauhinia Rhapsody

The Literary Journal of Lingnan University | 2018-2019

By Lingnan University Students

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The editorial team of Bauhinia Rhapsody. *Front row: L-R Emma, Neba, Michael, Hadarab, Karina; Middle row: L-R Tooba, Renꝯ, Demi, Carmen. Back row L-R Stephanie, Thibault, Sophia, Lea, Carter. Photo by Declan Chow. (Mary Garcia not depicted).*

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The bauhinia is a tropical flower native to Asia, and the symbol of Hong Kong, used on the city's new flag in the post-colonial era.

Front and Back Cover artwork by Mary Garcia

Printed in Hong Kong

By Lingnan University Students

Preface for Bauhinia Rhapsody: A Big Thank-you!

Professor Mike Ingham, Department of English

May 2019

Before you turn the pages (or scroll down) eagerly to enjoy the creative imagination of our contributors, I would ask you to reflect on the enormous value to our university of being able to rely on the editorial guidance of a professional writer-in-residence, whether in Chinese or in English. We have been extremely fortunate this past term to have an inspiring and experienced travel writer, journalist and teacher in Michael Luongo working in our Department of English, and acting as Chief Editor of our creative journal. Michael arrived in Hong Kong for a one-term residency courtesy of our ever-supportive Lingnan Foundation, for which special thanks are due to Rona Henry, their Director of Grants, Programs & Operations. His residency was also arranged thanks to the liaison work of Ms. Jessie Law and Mr. Matthew Mo of our Office of Institutional Advancement, and we would like to thank them for their valuable help in making Michael's English writing residency a reality. Indeed, so successful was his first term with us that Michael's services were secured for the second term of the current academic year with the approval of our President.

I have seen at close quarters the impact that Michael's encouraging but challenging style of teaching writing has had on our students. He has illustrated by personal example the rigorous critical processes of drafting, redrafting, copy editing and proof-reading that are all part and parcel of the writer's craft. Genuine writers don't dash off creative work as though they were late assignments submitted as a result of last-minute effort - doubtless an experience familiar to some of us, if not others. (Note to editor: please check for typos!)

Patience, lengthy reflection, critical thought, self-critical appraisal, thorough revision of drafted material, willingness to listen to advice and feedback - whether incorporated or not - these are the tools which allow the writer to develop her or his craft.

It would be easy to take up a residency and do some high-profile events that have little contact with, or bearing on, the lives and experiences of the students at Lingnan. Such prestigious and personally beneficial residencies for writers are normal in the United States and elsewhere. It is much harder to work closely with students on the specific details of their writing in a second language than it is to preside over a programme where everything is already in place and students are writing in their first language. We have benefited from Michael's knowledge of the various genres of fiction and non-fiction, his experience of running creative workshops, facilitating and supervising creative projects, encouraging and advising and, above all, from his tremendous empathy with and encouragement for the creativity of our students. Like our previous visiting overseas and local writers-in-residence, Michael has recognised and nurtured their creative instincts and abilities in English expression. The creative work contained in this journal reflects, therefore, not just our students' budding talents - which we hope they will develop further - but Michael's dedicated work over the past two terms.

All of us - staff and students - who have worked with Michael are profoundly grateful for his wonderful contribution, and we wish him well for his own future writing projects. Thank you, Michael. We won't forget you and look forward to seeing you again in the near future, and in any case this exciting new journal will ensure you remain in our hearts and minds.

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Thanks should also go to our student editors who have assisted Michael, and also to those students who have contributed to this enterprise - the first English Dept creative journal to appear both as an e-version on our university intranet and as a hard copy, an innovation that has been realised thanks to Michael. Thanks all for your perseverance and creativity in producing this latest English Dept creative journal and for continuing a tradition in which we can all take pride.

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A Letter from the Editor:

Michael T. Luongo, *Writer-in-Residence, Department of English*

The time to say goodbye to Lingnan University, beloved Hong Kong, and end my time as Writer-in-Residence has finally come. To be a foreign instructor in a foreign land for a year with all of you has been a highlight of my fifty years on this planet, one I will never forget. Indeed, I believe it has been as much of a learning and growing experience for me as I hope it was for my students and all the others I have come to know in Hong Kong through my work.

I departed Hong Kong at a pivotal moment, a time when millions are massing in its city center, struggling to understand their future in a changing world. There have been both many joys and trials in teaching young people journalism and creative writing during this period, some of it from a classroom which overlooked our university's own Tiananmen Square memorial, a reminder of the importance of free speech, protest, and the right to assembly the masses of Hong Kong have long fought to protect. None of us knows what the future holds, but I will always wonder what it will be like for each and every one of my students, and for all the others in Hong Kong whose lives have touched my own.

I came to Lingnan at a time when we were also looking back, as much as we were always looking forward. My residency at Lingnan coincided with our 50th anniversary commemorations, a time of intense celebration paired with historical research. Always curious, I learned more of our history from university events, exhibits and lectures at the Fong Sum Wood Library, and most of all, through the photo essays on display along the covered corridor leading to the Jackie Chan Gymnasium.

All of this taught me that Lingnan is far more than 50 years old. In fact, we are one of the oldest of all the advanced learning institutions in China, our history dating back to the late 1800s. The 50th anniversary merely commemorates our establishment in Hong Kong, largely for a noble reason under horrific circumstances. Determined to continue teaching against all odds, the professors of Lingnan University abandoned our Guangzhou campus in the midst of the Cultural Revolution, when educators were vilified, pilloried, paraded around town squares, sent for re-education, and at times, murdered. Still, the professors of Lingnan University knew there was no higher value than that of education, and they found a haven in the fragrant harbor. This was one part of our long history, revealed alongside photographs and explanations of our American religious origins, our early years as the imperial Qing dynasty collapsed, ushering in a new era, to the visit by the great leader and President, Dr. Sun Yat Sen. He was a man so honored that no matter where you stand in Chinese politics, you revere him, and his name now graces our original campus. Intriguingly, I learned we had been in Hong Kong before, part of a process of playing leapfrog under the Japanese occupation in the 1930s and 1940s during World War II, a conflict few Westerners seem to know touched China long before it affected any other part of the globe. Even the resolution of this conflict and the arrival of communism brought more changes to Lingnan, including an official disconnection from our early religious origins, the crosses on the main campus building in Guangzhou replaced with diamond patterns, perhaps foreshadowing the modern Chinese embrace of capitalism.

The most important thing I learned from all of this is that Lingnan University is a place where professors have fought to teach and ensure that their students learn, no matter

what obstacles are thrown their way in that process. I hope in some way my work has continued this important legacy.

Part of that legacy is a physical one, the Lingnan Literary Journal itself, the book you have now in your hands, a work of Lingnan University students. That which we write and leave behind is how we communicate with the future, and it is in this way that the students of Lingnan, here during the 2018-2019 academic year, will continue to have impact long after they have left the campus here in Tuen Mun, nestled against the foothills of Hong Kong's mountains. This year is also the first year that we will have a web version of the literary journal. This will allow students to use it as a portfolio and resume builder for their creative future, so that prospective employers and others can see their university accomplishments.

The work you see here is that of my own students, from either of my two classes, Arts, Creative Writing & Journalism, taught in the Fall and Spring of my time here, and Journalism Principles & Social Media, taught only in the Spring. Save for Mary Garcia who designed the covers, the editorial team came from my Fall class. There is also the writing and visual efforts of students I have never met in person, but which spoke to all of us. Others I met along the way at numerous events on campus, engaging them in conversation and asking them to submit their work. The team also recruited, through passive means like posters, and through setting up tables on campus. Still other contributions came from Professor Ingham's class, gifting us with interesting intertextual work based on songs and poems, a favorite method of his for inspiring his students' creativity. Mike's deep desire to engage with his students, in and out of the classroom, was also something that inspired me to always try to give more and reach out to students

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across the spectrum at Lingnan. I believe through my efforts and the efforts of so many others, the journal as you see it now represents a broad range of Lingnan's diverse student body, locals and exchange students alike.

This might also be the first time we have an official name for the Lingnan University Literary Journal, *Bauhinia Rhapsody*. The name is an obvious play on words, combining the Queen song *Bohemian Rhapsody*, newly popularized in Hong Kong upon the release of the eponymous movie, and the *bauhinia*, the flower which is the symbol of Hong Kong. We hope you like this name. As I recall, it was an idea Hadarah Kane Alcantara Palencia, better known as Arah, put forward. Another suggested name for the journal was *Vinegar and Chocolate*, by Stephanie Gurung, which also rang very well for all of us, symbolizing how life can be simultaneously bitter and sweet. Ultimately, with its local meaning, we have decided to embrace *Bauhinia Rhapsody* for this edition, and we hope that future editors continue the name, so unique and symbolic of the multifoil, multicultural and beautifully colored literary world of Hong Kong which has nurtured all of us, whether we are here for only a year as I was or have lived within this great harbor city all of our lives.

Looking back, I think that it was wonderful that in my position as *Writer-in-Residence* I was immersed deeply within both the literary world and the journalism world in Hong Kong, the two main methods of writing I had come to teach the students, along with photojournalism. I felt at all times welcomed, at so many events, by so many people, whether *CHA Literary Journal* or the *Hong Kong Literary Festival* or the *Foreign Correspondents Club*, the *News Expo*, and so many other events and places throughout the city. This also includes the incredible welcome and support

from my Department of English colleagues, where we were able to host Hong Kong's only university-based World Press Freedom Day event. Indeed, I believe support for the work I did came from throughout Lingnan, without which I never could have done anything I did here.

Still, I wished I could have done even more for the students at Lingnan and elsewhere in Hong Kong. I can also say, on a personal basis, there was so much more in Hong Kong I wished I got to see during my time as well. It's an enormous city, with so much to offer. Still, in addition to teaching, I threw myself into sightseeing, temple visits, festivals from the Sevens to the Bun Festival to Chinese New Year to Tin Hau and so many more, often with helpful advice from students and faculty alike, sometimes getting chased by dragons in the streets along the way.

One thing is certain however and that is simply that I am happy to have had the time I had in Hong Kong and at Lingnan, to see and experience something new, meet people whose lives are vastly different from my own, and have learned from them and from all of you. My time at Lingnan has been a privilege, one that reminds me that I am indeed a very lucky person. The ability to have worked with the students on this journal, and on so many other projects in Hong Kong is a gift I will always cherish.

Thank you Lingnan. And thank you Hong Kong.

Sincerely,

Michael T. Luongo

*2018-2019 Lingnan University Department of English
Writer-in-Residence*

Written in New York City, July 2019

By Lingnan University Students

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Short Stories & Fiction

Wingman

By Demi Kong

The colours went wrong in this world, I think. They were too cold and harsh. Everything seemed untouchable. It hurt.

No one knew about this. I didn't know whether the errors belonged to me or to the others. The others looked totally fine. In my childhood memories, there were boys and girls always running around holding each other's hands. But I just couldn't.

I thought I was sick, even my parents thought the same. They brought me to the doctors and I told them sometimes I could only see black and white. But all the doctors I'd visited diagnosed me as normal. Was it normal? How to define normal? I wasn't sure.

It was very miserable to confess that I made no friends in school. But to be honest I rather kept myself at the back in the classroom and listened to the teachers. My teachers never called me to answer questions or to help them, which was a good thing. The world could still be perfect without me.

But he approached me in my final year in high school. He asked me to bring him to the principal's office. My face must be frozen that time because he immediately explained to me he was a newcomer. The truth was I was shock as he talked to me, but it was a forever secret. For once I felt myself being normal. He did not think I was strange. I felt connected to the world. We became good friends, although he saw the world as same as the others. But who care? As long as he never knew I saw the world differently, then everything would remain fine.

It's 3 pm. The door of my office was opened. I knew it was him without looking. He showed up again today, in fact almost every single day. My secretary could now remember him. But I didn't mind. His presence was enjoyable. The

smell of his cigarette kept me awake from the dull paperwork. Everything became vibrant with him, colours were back, the world recovered and I felt less sick.

“Hey, have you been in a relationship before?” He laid on the couch and asked.

“I think you know me long enough to answer the question yourself.”

“Well, just confirming.”

“I will never lie to you.”

He always dozed off on the couch. It gave me around two hours to finish the remaining works and leave for dinner with him. The bistro few blocks away from here was our usual spot. We were regulars. We didn't even need to order and the meal would automatically come.

We were each other's routine.

He is awake after I went to the lavatory. He was standing near the window to peek the girl in the next building — his new hobby. The deepest mind of mine thought he was so stupid to chase the shadow of someone he didn't know.

“Hey, she is about to leave.” He said with excitement.

“Uh huh.”

This ignorance must be continued. It's better to be this way.

“What if” was always a silly question but sometimes I wondered *what if* I followed my heart. It was prohibited, dangerous and even horrifying. The future was unforeseeable. The world may abandon me right away. He would leave me. I would be isolated. The colours would slip away again. Black and white would be back with me.

“Cough, cough.” I chock myself even by the thought of it.

By Lingnan University Students

“Don’t suffocate yourself, let’s go get some fresh air.” He stopped peeking and turned to me.

“I am ready to eat.”

“Not yet. We are having an inspection, Dr Watson.” He smirked and pointed at the building the girl was in.

Being his wingman was the toughest, but there should be no excuse for me to reject. I knew after the inspection, there would be no colour in my world for a long time. So, I would then hide in the closet and wish for his return.

“Sure.”

Zombie Endings 101

By Demi Kong

Your city is fallen. The tactics fail.

You lose connection with your group of survivors.

What can you do to survive?

If you keep a little hope for this world, **start from B.**

A.

You are alone. It takes you months to give up finding your friends. You start making a survive guide to yourself. Every habit you have observed from the zombies, you follow. For example: Don't talk, Don't eat normal food, Don't feel, Don't remember, Don't act like a human. Because you know you are doomed. The frustration is consuming you. There is no possibility of you winning against the undead. So later you become a living dead. You remain a tiny hope to see the others back. But after few days the zombies finally find you. You are not supposed to feel anything. You are following the guideline. You let them consume you. You don't fight back.

You become one of them. The is the end.

B.

You accept the fact that the others are lost. However, you continue to defend the human world. You try to search for every source that can help fighting the zombies. You try to fix it. You even reach a lab that has tried to produce remedies for the infection. But science is never your thing. The labels on the bottles and the papers on the tables are confusing you. There is nothing you can understand. You try to call every number in the phone book to call for help. No one answers. You keep yourself in the lab for weeks. There are food and weapons left that can maybe maintain your life for a month or more.

You fight a lot of zombies during this month. You've found yourself tired by these situations. You are drained by killing

every walking dead. Seeing them staggering on the street makes you sick. You feel hopeless. You even run out of food and drink and everything a human being needs to survive. So then, you continue as in A.

C.

The world is so fucked up now so you decide to do everything you want to do in the past. Of course, you keep yourself with weapons. Maybe a short gun, a sharp knife or even a baseball bat from a famous historic baseball player that is your favourite so you've taken it from the baseball museum.

The first thought is to break into a bank. You swim at the pool of money. The pockets of your clothes and your backpack are stuffed with money. You think you can enjoy the luxurious life. But hell no. The society is destroyed. The racks in the stores are nearly empty. Money has no use in a zombie apocalypse. Also, there are still zombies.

You despair. So then, you continue as in A.

D.

The mission of searching your friends is worthless. You diverge from the city since zombies are more concentrated there. You then stumble across a group of survivors on the outskirts of the city. The thrill of meeting someone alive is dizzy and overwhelming. But instead of welcoming you, they almost kill you. Sounds and movements in the bushes always trigger their nerve. Luckily, your yell stops their moves.

Tension and fear are burning the group. They don't know what to do. They ask you with their sparkling eyes about the situation inside the city. You cannot deceive them. The world is devastating. All places are in danger. The sounds of breaking hearts are so loud that you want to cover your ears. The lives of their missing families are destined. They know

already but choose to omit it. It is better that you confirm them the truth. The reminiscence should be wiped away.

You stay with the group for months. It will always be better with company. Talking and laughing have finally returned to you. But problems appear in this little community. There are clashes between them. Part of them feels that they should move, but part of them doesn't. The past keeps them away from the city so they cannot search for resources. It is hard to let go. The resources left can only manage for few weeks. They even argue about something that should not be argued. The conflicts cannot be stopped.

You even stop one of them punching the other into death. They are shaking. The others are crying. The community is cracking.

You start realising everyone in this apocalypse has collapsed. Everyone could not function normally. The normal, to put it right, has no longer existed.

You leave them. So then, you continue as in A.

E.

You stay on a rooftop every night. The undead prefers staying on the ground more. The nights are tough. Laying on the hard and cold concrete is uncomfortable. The memories reveal themselves from your heart. You count the stars to blind your mind. The temporary peace at night is the best you can get, at least you don't need to face the undead.

There are multiple mornings you discover yourself covered in tears. The pain even attacks you in the dream. You can only let it fade.

You are getting ready to search for food one day. But all of a sudden there is growl coming from the fire door. Your heart beats fast. You immediately hold tight with your gun, take a deep breath and then push the door open.

It smells you. It is on the staircase and looking for you. You want to kill it fast. You target on it. It turns its head to you. You almost drop your gun — your love is standing right in front of you. One of its arms is chopped off. The flies are sticking on the dry blood. You say your love's name as if you two meet when you are coming back from a long business trip. You are desperate for a reply but all you hear is grumble. Those eyes, which once have the magical power of knowing what you want, have gone. A hollow has replaced them. Its hands are reaching you but not for a hug. You are shuddering so much that you cannot aim at it.

You run back to the rooftop and drag the door closed. It is banging the door too loud. You cannot decide what to do. You love this person too much. You want to take it with you because there may be remedies. It slams the door non-stop. But then the image of it tries to eat you scares you. You are not able to handle this.

You shoot it.

The fear comes after you in the following nights on a rooftop. The sorrow is haunting you. You lose the motivation to fight back. So then, you continue as in A.

F.

If you feel this is all too depressing, there is one true suggestion – kill yourself before the zombies do. The only ending you will get is death, so why not kill yourself and let the humanity remain in you?

1918 Novel

By Logan Tse

War never changed.

I am Jacob Henry, a lieutenant colonel of the Fourth Army who has served in the Great War.

And this is my story.

Chapter 1: Home

11 November 1918 11 a.m.

The Armistice has been signed.

And the Great War has come to an end.

For four years, I have fought in the war.

For four years, I believe I have brought back the glory for my family and country.

For the last three days, I have spent my time on an ocean liner and chatted with other officers on deck. All of us cheer about the end of the war, and the honour we have received.

Finally, I have returned home.

Union Jacks wave all around the pier, people greet their heroes with the warmest welcome.

'Nice view isn't it, Mr. Henry. At least the war means something.'

I laugh.

Carrying my luggage, wearing my No.2 service dress with medal ribbons sewn on the left chest. A single pip with a crown present on both my shoulders indicate my rank as a

lieutenant colonel, when I step down from stairs, footmen salute to me and the other officers.

Many officers have decided to return home; they shake hands with me and invite me to their home after I have finished my duty in London.

Before I arrived, I have reserved a fine hotel near the Oxford Street and decided to stay there for a week and return home before Christmas.

Soon after I step in my room, a maid hands me over the telegraph.

'Lt. Colonel Jacob Henry, in represents of His Majesty Army, we would like to invite you to the party on 28th November 1918 in St. James Court'

Soon after, I realize I needed proper attire. I have brought the No.10 with me; yet, I lost my shoes during the war.

For the past few years when I was stationed on the field, there were no parties; I did not need any fine shoes.

There can be two possible ways to obtain my new shoe.

Either send a telegraph ask my family to send it for me, or purchase from the local retailers.

It will be costly to ask my family member to send, moreover, it is not guaranteed I can receive it by the coming weekend.

Maybe, buying a shoe from nearby retailers can be cheaper; though, there will be a risk which I may not be able to find a shop who will sell me only one single shoe.

Chapter II: Shoe

Luckily, my hotel was near Oxford Street, one of the busiest streets in England, and probably the whole Empire. It sells

goods from all over the world. Finding a shoe should not be a difficult task.

The first shop I have encountered names 'C.J Clark's Boots & Shoes'. From the outside glass, I see three shelves locate on three different sides of the wall, several types of shoes and boots are there as showpieces. I walk into the shop.

'Morning sir, how are you doing?' One mid-aged man walks toward me.

'Great. I would like to buy an Oxford shoe.'

'Sure, what's the size?' The shopkeeper stares at my uniform for seconds.

'12-inch-long, 2.5-inch height. I want the shoe to be with top-class Scotland leather and black in colour.'

The shopkeeper takes a pair of shoes from the storage.

'Army?'

'Yes, Fourth Army, Royal Lincolnshire Regiment.'

'Great. My son has served in Navy as well.'

'Oh?'

'Queen Elizabeth Battleship, he is a radio telegraphist.'

'Splendid! You must be proud of your son. The shoe looks perfect. May you help me to pack it up? I only need the right one.'

The shopkeeper appears astonished.

'Sir, shoes sell in pair.'

I show him my left leg, installed with the new prosthesis.

'I am so sorry sir.'

‘But you know... we are just small business.’

I leave the shop, I know how he has respected me; though, they may not be able to suffer the loss from selling only one shoe to me, which means they will not be able to sell the other one.

I may buy a pair of shoes and just wear one of those. But I believe that I have the right to only purchase a single shoe. I have fought for the country, at least I can request something from the country.

And this is my pride.

The second shoes shop was ‘Ive Shoes Shop and Repair’. It was a small shop, a repair desk right next to the door.

‘Morning...’

‘I would like to buy one single shoe.’

‘We are not doing business with the officers.’

I was surprised by what the lady said.

‘Pardon?’

‘This nation has killed our sons! All!’

‘Madam...’

‘GO! NEVER COME BACK!’

The shopkeeper slaps the door and locks it. She turns around and walks away.

I am surprised and stunned, still near the door until an old man comes.

‘Sir, I apologize for Ive’s behaviour.’

I look at him with questions.

'She lost all of her sons in the war, all of them in the Fourth Army. Although they were not officers, they wore similar uniforms as yours and they sent a picture every year during the war. Until last Christmas, when all four boys were killed.'

'Sorry.'

'Sorry for her rudeness and impoliteness, Sir. I suggest you go to the opposite street if you want to buy one single shoe. I have heard that many wounded soldiers buy the shoe there.'

'Thank you for your kindly information, Sir.'

'Just George. I am not a 'Sir', just an old man hangs around. Good-day, lieutenant colonel.'

'Good-day.'

I walk across the tram rail, a Union Jack hangs and swings. From the exterior wall to the roof, people celebrate the victory.

I start to doubt. What did we actually fight for? And then I remember, frankly speaking, as an officer, I have few battle experiences. I have been in the Great War and the Second Boer War. Since I belong to the Royal Artillery, I seldom have the chance to face enemies directly. After I have returned from the Boer War, I served as a drill instructor in the Academy.

The first time I was in the trench would be the Battle of Somme, where I took my Lee Enfield rifle and fired on the Germans directly. And the heroic action of protecting the artillery pieces and the counter-attack I lead earned me a Distinguished Conduct Medal.

I seldom know about the life of other soldiers. While I think, I have arrived the third shoes shop, Calzados Torres.

It looks as normal as the first shoes shop I entered.

By Lingnan University Students

I step in the shop.

‘Greeting, I would like to buy one single shoe.’

‘Sure, we sell single shoes.’ She smiles.

‘12-inch-long, 2.5-inch height, right foot. I want the shoe with top-class Scotland leather and black in colour.’ I say.

‘Sorry sir, out of stock.’

The lady walks to the storage and comes back with a disappointing message.

‘Next week, may restock, not sure.’

She continues with a remorseful smile.

I thanks for her help and I leave the shop.

It seems that I will not be able to find my shoe today, because the sunset has already started to fade far from the horizon.

I decide to walk to the post office.

There will not be enough time to order a single shoe from the cordwainer. It seems to me that the only way to have my shoe will be seeking help from my family.

I walk to the post office. Suddenly, I see a familiar person who I have known for years.

‘William! Is that you?’

‘Oh, little Jacob!’

‘A shoe huh. I have one, you can have it.’

‘When.’

‘Tonight? We can have dinner as well. I will inform her to cook bit more.’

‘Certainly.’

William Smith, my prior family cordwainer. Smith's Family has made shoes for my family for generations. I used to go to his home every year when I was still a child, he knows me well as my parents. After he has sent the telegraph, we go to his home.

'Hasn't changed.'

'Physically. Things always change, son.' He opens the door, inviting me in. I am astonished by the plain interior design. The room has nothing special, just white painted walls and daily items they need. I ask him why he has such a simple life when he serves many nobles even the royal family.

'I am just a cordwainer.' William replies with laughter.

'I have donated all my savings for the soldiers who sacrificed.' He explains, leading me to the sitting room where he gives me a single shoe.

'Quarter brogue oxford shoe with top-class leather, the vamp made of a single piece of ox leather. I am sure you can use it for quite a period.'

'I always trust the shoes you make.'

'It's my honour.'

I examine the shoe. Even the severest gentleman could not find a single mistake from it. After I have finished dinner with William and his wife, I leave the house with pleasure and happiness.

Chapter III: Funeral

I feel excited about the new shoe.

I have no idea why Old William notices my wound and prepares such a shoe for me.

By Lingnan University Students

Although I sent letters to my family regularly during the war, I seldom talk about my wound. I do not want them to worry too much for me.

In the whole week I travel around in London and meet some old friends, they are surprised what Old William has done. All of them believe that my younger sister told Old William about my injury and had ordered a proper shoe for me.

After the meeting with colleagues in Army, I have decided to visit Old William and show my gratefulness.

I take a carriage to arrive his house, when I try to knock the door; suddenly, William walks out from the house with a black suit.

‘William?’

‘Follow me if you want to.’

I follow him to a church where a funeral holds.

When I see the picture of a young man, I realise who he is.

Old William’s son, 17 years old who had joined the army.

Legally, only 18 years old or above let one join the army; though, I know those officers in the recruit department simply don’t care, they just want more freshmen on the field.

I saw him one year ago when I visited Old William, and his son had just returned from the field for Christmas.

Now, he belongs to another world.

I sit on the bench and wait for Old William.

It takes four hours for the funeral to finish. Many of his friends come and say their last farewell to their brother. Most of them are footmen and some non-commissioned officers.

I follow them to the graveyard.

'I remember what you said about the war.' William comes to me and talks to me with a warm smile.

'I'm so sorry. I didn't know you lost your son.'

He pats my shoulder and leads me back to his house.

'Do you still remember what I told you?'

'War never changed.'

'Indeed.'

He hands me a history book, showing me a picture of Napoleonic War.

'What do you see.'

'General Wellington with the Flag and glory.'

He covers the top half of the picture and asks me again.

'What do you see, son.'

'Bodies of French.'

It just reflects the phrase he has told me before.

War never changed.

No matter how the war has changed in its scale, manner and weapon.

The advance of technology has improved our living quality, at the same time, just simply makes our way of 'murdering' quicker and more efficient.

Vickers machine gun, 18-pound field artillery, Mark VI tank and Vickers FB.5 gun bus.

The war means nothing but killing each other with a sounds reason.

By Lingnan University Students

'Change your mind?' Old William brings me a cup of tea and biscuits. 'It's alright, son. That's not your fraud anyway.'

'Do I need to return my shoe to you. You made it for your son, right?'

He silences.

'Keep it son. It suits you.'

He sits down and holds the biscuit.

'Pray the peace conference in Versailles will at least keep us hundred years away from the war. Cheers.'

I laugh.

1996

By Emma Chau Nga Wing

In my country, people could disappear all of a sudden. Some came back after years, looking scrawny. Some came back after months, tears in their eyes. Some never came back. Never. And no one knew where they were, or where they had been. I didn't know they had a name until later.

I used to believe my life was perfect, my country the best. It was until my father languished from hunger, my mother waiting like a vulture. While my mother's dream became reality, she lost her life shortly in the chaos created by people craving the flesh of my dead father instead of leaves, bugs and tree roots. I became an orphan, alone and hopeless.

One night I saw my neighbor near the forbidden river, claiming he was looking for food, asking me to back off. I was glad I didn't. I was too excited to stay silent when I found a dead bird to eat. We were heard. Someone yelled, 'Defectors!' From then on, 'defectors' became our names, or just my name. All I remembered were scary looking men chasing us. I suggested sharing the bird to bribe them, but he was probably dropped on his head as an infant, saying run or be executed. I didn't understand they considered me as a countrymen trying to run away until they shouted 'You will never get to live with our enemies'. If I went back, I would be executed in front of everyone, accused of being a traitor to my country. I decided to run with him thinking there's no reason to stay, without imagining the consequences. Guns fired. I heard drops of my companion's blood dripping on the ground, almost silently screaming. 'I will be on my own.' I told myself. A dumb man he was. Dumb, yet innocent.

To this day, I still am thankful to him for teaching me how to disguise myself as a floating dead body. I laid down next to the crimson red river bed every day before sunset, making

full use of the time to clumsily creep towards the place with dazzles sparkling when the night comes. They said it's light. I didn't reckon how long this routine had lasted, but I told myself that it was not far when I could no longer see the crimson colors on the river. I saw green leaves with morning dew, the best food I had had in my life.

The destination. I had totally lost my way when I first put my feet on enemy land. I was surprised to see moving staircases and surprisingly, people looked like they knew exactly where they were going. Their propaganda on the streets lit up. Men and women walked shoulder to shoulder, some of them kissing and hugging on the streets. Their hair was in different colors, some of them weirdly vibrant, but we were speaking the same language. My makeshift clothes immediately attracted the attention of the Koreans. Some of them gave me their currencies. A middle-aged woman asked me, 'Are you...by any chance... from the North?' Little did she know I had been waiting for a person I could trust to talk to. I nodded and was sent to a skyscraper by her.

I was asked questions about the State Security Department, the distribution of districts, towns and neighborhoods. The people there offered me food and drinks I had never tried before, and I fancied the small cartons of apple juice most. The round pastry with pineapples tasted great. What a pity I forgot what they were called. The weather there was ridiculous to me. It was snowing so heavily I had never seen so much white on the ground before, most of the time we would have eaten it. And people seemed to be happy about snowing. Their buildings were so safely sealed that not a single breeze of wind could get in. They always kept their doors and windows shut, and ceaselessly asked if I needed more clothes to wear.

It was the warmest winter I ever experienced.

The Boy with Different-Colored Eyes

By Emma Chau Nga Wing

Hello. The name is Nearly Eyeless Felix. Have you heard of me? It's okay, you can look into my eyes. I had got used to people staring at them. I heard from the creatures here that I died and arrived here 1903. Where are you from? And why are you here? Allow me to tell you my story first.

I was born with these eyes. The left one's blue, the right green. No matter where I went, people stared. I did not enjoy the attention. Everyone likes to have something special about themselves I guess, but not everyone has the guts to really, be unique. I hate to outstand from the others. Being unique brought me where I am today. In the old days, no one should be born unique. If your head bone was too flat, your upper lip extended into your nose, or your hair was whiter than blond, you would be killed by the villagers on the day of your first birthday and turned into offerings to the Divine. Your own parents could and would not help. I was lucky. People thought having different-colored eyes would cause no harm, so I peacefully lived until I was six.

When I was six, my classmates started picking on me because the color of my eyes were different. I would do my best to be friendly, telling them I was no different. However, they kept calling names. I was a freak to them. I then decided to scare them off with a little joke, saying that I could see ghosts with my different colored eyes. I told the fat bully that there was a baby ghost with red eyes and white hair right behind him. You wouldn't believe how fast the rumor spread across our village, and how foolish people were. Coincidentally, A baby girl was killed 10 years ago. She had blue eyes and was born with white hair. Everyone believed I was connected with ghosts, thinking I would only threaten their lives if I stayed there. The rumors turned me into a monster, and all the villagers, including my father and my mother, agreed to

pull my eyes out, stone me and burn me alive on my seventh birthday. I screeched and screeched, I squealed and squealed. Everyone heard me, yet no one set me free.

I died tragically, yet now my spirit lives longer than anyone. My fear, anger, and hostility towards the injustice, the cold-blooded villagers, especially my parents had made me powerful as ever. I felt invincible. You might not claim justice in hell, but you could take revenge. For every baby killed in the village, he or she will join my army. For every adult who stoned us, burned us, or killed us in any other ways, we swore they could never live happily after they die.

Of course, I died in pain, and it is now rumored villagers hear me screaming in their dreams. My parents were no exceptions. They were the first who died after me. Because I was angry at my classmates and the big bully, the first thing I did after dying was haunting the village school. I would pull out the bully's chair, kick his ass, throw blackboard brushes at teachers, make worksheets all over the place, pull girls' hair and blow up the headmaster's office. It was so much fun. It was not fun for my parents though. The villagers thought the reason of these events was because I was a wronged evil child. They believed if my parents were stoned to death, they would accompany me and make me happier, bringing peace to our village. They realized only when stones started hitting their bodies that it was wrong to not have rescued me.

I became the scariest ghost to everyone, living or dead. Rumor has it that I used to be a bubbly boy who liked to sing. "When Nearly Eyeless Felix hears Children's songs from music boxes, he would sing along and scream at children's ears, making lots of children hearing impaired and himself more powerful." Yes, yes, villagers. Fear shall linger in EACH of your hearts FOREVER.

It's your turn to tell stories. Were you there when I was stoned? Are you one of them? I think I might have seen you.

Untitled

By Ienan

The wind picks up, bringing with it the scent of jasmine, inducing in me a warmth that starts from my nose, and leads down excruciatingly slowly through my body to my core. The palm trees of my beach begin swaying gently, left and right, the wind gently nudging it around. The waves lapped gently on my shore, lightly kissing the rocks. Some water lands on my tongue, salty yet sweet. I grab the trunk of a nearby palm tree, using its steel-hard yet velvet-soft pillar to steady myself from succumbing to the stimuli.

I see lights, like a filter, overlaying everything else, as if I were the only one allowed to see them. They swirled slowly, forming intricate pattern after intricate pattern, joining and breaking apart after each hit of the waves against the rock. The lights followed the rhythm of the waves. A slow waltz for now, taking their time dancing with each other, revelling in the slow pleasure.

Pound. Recede. Pound. Recede.

A rose blooms, its petals open in embrace. Waiting as if to receive a gift. The lights swirl around it, teasing and touching its core, as if begging me to taste. A hummingbird appears out of nowhere, fluttering about the rose, before moving in, using its long, slim beak to claim its treasure. It drinks too fast, thick, silver honey dripping down it's shaft. Deeper in, the trees shake. Though not by wind, but by a hidden force. The leaves bounce along a hidden rhythm, each shake as if responding to each hit of a drum while a siren sings her soul to you.

“I’ve been drinking watermelon.”

By Lingnan University Students

A sentence I barely perceive from a voice I barely hear.
Beyoncé? Drunk In Love. My skin, red in heat,
pockmarked by black marks. A watermelon. My essence
being drunk like watermelon juice. I am drunk from that
red juice.

The wind more violent now. A branch breaks off from its
origin, falling into the water. The waves push it around.
Turbulent. Erratic. Wood grinding against rocks.

The crescendo is upon us.

Yes.

Yes.

Colour explodes everywhere, like fireworks. The
hummingbird withdraws from the rose, a little honey
dripping off the tip of its beak, having gotten its fill. The
waves ripple and crash against my beach. Again and again.
Each crash causing me to go under the waves, deep in
ecstasy. The wind drowns out my pants, and I grip the
velvet sand underneath me, afraid I would not resurface.

I close my eyes, and the colours die down, their dance
slowing and their movement tiring, and they soon
disappear. The pressure upon my body lifts, and shifts to
the side, and I turn my head and open my eyes. Blue irises
stare back, filled with desire and a hint of exhaustion. Our
essences mingled on my stomach, a union of sorts.

We both smile, then drift off for the night, the taste of
coffee and bacon, of the morning after, already present on
my swollen lips.

The Whole Story

By Stephanie Gurung

The light autumn breeze caressed her skin as she walked up the steps that quiet evening. The only sound that could be heard was her light laughter that came from hearing what Mia had to say. The moon shining brightly above made it a picture-perfect scene.

She cautiously put her hand on the cold metal handle, examining the situation inside before gently pulling the glass door. She held her breath as thunderous applause replaced the last note of the song. People started moving around, so she scanned the crowded room for a place to stand.

“There are two seats over there,” Mia pointed to the front row before squeezing through the crowd.

As she walked over to the empty seat, she let her eyes wander the unfamiliar area, soaking in everything from the rustic design to the dimly lit lights. It was a sight she never wanted to forget. Then, he caught her eye. He was already looking her way. Their eyes met for a split moment before she shied away, breaking the singular moment they shared in space.

She fought the temptation to sneak another glance at him, but a part of her dared herself to do so, and she caved. His focus was still towards her direction, but he now leaned against a friend, engaging in a hushed conversation. She understood people enough to know that having his mate look her way as well likely meant that they were talking about her. To save herself from the embarrassment of getting caught staring, she quickly applauded as the next group walked on stage.

Soon the air transmitted the slow melodic song filled with beautiful harmonies. She distracted herself for the next few

minutes by asking Mia what she thought. When the song ended, she watched the band walk off stage towards the side he was seated at, giving her a chance to take another look at him. She took in his dark shaggy hair, his unbuttoned flannel over a plain t-shirt, and how he sat leaned back on the sofa in a relaxed manner. All of these in a short few seconds before her view was blocked by people moving around.

“Oh hey, it’s Devin and Elsie,” she followed Mia’s gaze to the couple they were acquainted with.

There they stood, with his arm around her shoulder, laughing with a group of their friends, the group of friends which included him. She turned to Mia, embracing herself to ask something out of character for herself, “should we go say hi?”

“That would be nice,” Mia thought aloud, but the questioner had already known what the answer would be. “Yes, let’s.”

She gestured for Mia to go first and followed behind as they walked across the room. She focused on the couple who were surprised to see them, made small talk and invited the two to join them. Mia looked over to her for confirmation, to which she responded with a shrug. The couple introduced their friends. The boy who had been talking to *him* made space between them and gave her a warm smile, inviting her to sit.

“Hi,” he said to her when she did.

It was another hour before the last performance ended. The group made their way out of the cafe and began saying their goodbyes.

“Seems like everyone will be heading to their dorms now,” he said to her, his gaze fixated on the group they were with

before returning to her. “I’m a little hungry. Do you want to go get something to eat?”

“Um- just us?” she asked, feeling a little awkward.

“I guess. If that’s okay with you.”

“Um, I don’t really want to walk back to my dorm alone at this hour,” she admitted shyly.

“Then I’ll walk you back.”

*

Ding!

Hey, what are you up to?

Studying. Gonna be pulling an all-nighter tonight.

Swish!

Ding!

That’s sad. Good luck!

She sat at her desk with her hands on her head half an hour later, struggling to understand the material when a firm knock on the door disrupted her thoughts. She looked at the clock on the wall, wondering why someone would find her at that hour.

Her heart skipped a beat, but she could not hide the surprise on her face to seeing him on the other side. He lifted up a large bag.

“You’re gonna need some energy to study all night,” he said as he looked into the bag. “They’re just small stuff - biscuits, chocolate, chips. Oh, and energy drinks, since you don’t drink coffee.”

She felt herself fall in deeper as she listened to his low voice, unable to take her eyes off him. When he had finished speaking and she finally processed his gesture, she looked down at her feet in attempt to hide the smile that had crept on her face.

“Did you purposely walk from your dorm to the store for this?” she looked up and tilted her head slightly.

“Yeah, it’s just a ten-minute walk,” he shrugged as if it were completely normal to buy snacks for someone who lived in a different hall residence at two in the morning.

She scoffed and shook her head, but the corners of her lips turned upwards. “Thank you. That was sweet of you.”

He shrugged nonchalantly once more. “Okay, I’m not gonna disturb you any longer,” he put the bag on the floor and shoved his hands in his pockets. “Study hard.”

He was about to turn away when she took a step towards him and closed the gap between them by reaching up to hug him. It took him a moment to return the embrace, but it ended all too soon, and she took a step back.

“Good night,” she said softly.

“Night.”

*

“This totally isn’t suspicious at all,” she said sarcastically as he climbed over a small metal gate with a sign that said “KEEP OUT” on it. She raised an eyebrow. “Are you going to kill me?”

He chuckled and extended his hand to her, “come on.”

“You didn’t answer my question!” she exclaimed as she grabbed his hand.

He shushed her playfully, making her chuckle. He led the way down the narrow road, keeping her hand in his. From time to time, he would tell her to be careful as they walked and reminded her not to stand near the edge in fear of her falling into the sea.

In a minute or two, he let go of her hand, and took a careful step on a large rock before reaching for her once more. He chose to sit where they would be closest to the sea, but not close enough to get splashed by the waves hitting the rocks.

“It’s nice here,” she commented as she released herself from his grasp and shoved her hands into her coat pocket.

“It’ll be even nicer in a few minutes,” he told her.

And he was right. They watched as the blue sky met the subtle green and the green met the tingly orange. He watched the serenity that grew on the face as she silently took in the view.

“You were right, it’s even nicer now,” she turned to look at him, only to find his eyes on her.

She could not unriddle the expression on his face, but she did not have to. In the next second, he slowly leaned in towards her until their lips met for a few sweet moments.

By Lingnan University Students

The sound of the wind and waves intensified, and she gently pulled away. She looked away shyly and buried herself into her scarf as the wind brushed her skin, replacing the warmth he had given her a moment before.

“Feeling cold?” he asked, to which she quickly replied with a nod.

He scooted closer to her and wrapped his arm around her. They remained in that position for the next few minutes, quietly watching the sky turn pitch black.

*

“Why are you so quiet?” he asked, taking a quick few steps so that he was in front of her. He walked backwards to face her.

“I’m just thinking,” she shrugged.

“Do you want to share what’s on your mind?” he lowered his head to meet her eyes that were fixated on the ground.

“Not really,” she looked into the distance to avoid making eye contact with him.

“You don’t think I noticed that your mood changed when she came in?”

“Who?”

“You know who.”

“You mean your ex-girlfriend? Why would she affect me?” her tone grew bitter.

“I’m wondering the same thing.” He waited for a reply but there was none. “There’s a reason we didn’t work out.”

“Well, it doesn’t help that you spent a lot of time talking to her. She’s pretty, and smart. And at one point of your life, you liked her. You guys have history.”

“Hey,” he got a hold of her wrist, preventing her from walking. “That’s all she is - history. She wasn’t right for me, but you are.”

He wrapped his arms around her, “I love *you*.”

*

Knock knock!

She turned and found him poking his head into her room. “I’m really busy,” she told him as she resumed to rushing around her room and picking up different supplies.

“Too busy to spare an hour?” he asked, sitting on her bed.

She sighed, “yes, too busy to spare an hour.”

“Even for lunch?”

“Lunch is gonna be a sandwich that I’ll consume in three minutes before getting back to work,” she told him, stuffing the things she needed in a bag.

“Okay, how about tomorrow?”

“I can’t.”

“This weekend?”

“Busy.”

“Seriously? I’ve barely seen you this month,” he walked over to her. “I’m lucky if I even see you for five minutes.”

“I know, and I’m sorry, but I made a commitment to host this event and I need to prepare for it,” she told him firmly, picking up another bag from the ground.

“What about your commitment to me?” he asked.

“What are we, married?”

“Hopefully one day, but only if the person I want to be with spends at least a *little* bit of time with me.”

“I - ” she choked, stopping to look at him. “I’m sorry but this is really important to me.”

“More important than me?” he asked.

“Right now, yes,” she told him.

“If you’re ever not too busy to be part of this relationship, call me.” He sighed and made his way to the door.

“You know I’ll only get busier after this. I have a bunch of other projects lined up.”

“Then you have a decision to make.”

She sighed, “I can’t do this right now.”

She crossed her arms and faced the window, waiting for a reply: the door closed behind him.

*

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“There are two seats over there,” Mia points to the front row before squeezing through the crowd.

As you walk over to the empty seat, you let your eyes wander the unfamiliar area, soaking in everything from the rustic design to the dimly lit lights. It is a sight you never want to forget. Then, he catches your eye. Knowing the whole story, or at least, a possible outcome of the story, what do you do?

By Lingnan University Students

**Short Stories Inspired By
Songs and Poems**

A Specially Selected Collection

From Professor Mike Ingham's

English 3274 Class

Literature and Adaptation

The Stare

By Molly Li Manlin

I look out of the window; there goes the bright moonlight. So similar to the color of her snow-like skin—smooth and purified. “Ten years, it’s been ten years already.” The number “10” struck my heart suddenly; makes my heart stop for half a second.

Lying in bed I can’t help recalling the scenes in my brain over and over again, our last encounter. Right now, I look around and close my eyes—a wooden squeaking bed, a simple bookshelf, it seems that nothing else is surrounding me. I can’t help but repeat Emperor Liu’s sincere promise. Still, it’s hard for a man to accept the truth that all that he’s been fighting for could lead to such a tragedy. All those strong feelings bring me back to Yi again that same lonely night.

“Why don’t you just stay at home and do what you’re obliged to do as a husband and a father? Don’t you want a simple good life with the family as we have ever been hoping for?” When the Southern invaders were just about to approach the city in early Spring, Yi cried her heart out with my one-year-old son Jun in her arms. Jun was crying too. We looked into each other’s eyes, her tears kept streaming down her beautiful face. I didn’t actually feel anything, to be honest. The mixture of both annoying sounds of crying bothered the blueprint of post-war promotion embedded in my mind. Why is she crying over a fantastic and optimistic opportunity to improve her life and carry a good reputation for the whole family? I didn’t quite understand.

“I’m going there anyway. There’s nothing preventing me. I’ll be commanding officer and we’ll definitely be winning and then I’ll get promoted.” That night, Yi was combing her hair looking in the mirror while I was talking to her. She suddenly turned around, looking into my eyes. We stared at each other

for a long moment. The complicated feelings in my heart seemed extremely difficult for me to utter. It rained the next morning. I left, with a determined heart. My legs felt as heavy as lead, each step drove a stake through my bleeding heart. I didn't look back though I knew I really should have done.

Sometimes fate just plays a joke on an aspiring man like me. And I had no idea that particular goodbye would mean I never got the chance to see her — my beloved wife who married me at the mere age of 16 — ever again.

My marriage to Yi was arranged by our parents. Since I could not meet my bride, let alone get to know her, prior to this, the wedding ceremony was the most uneasy night of my entire life. Marrying a girl who didn't understand me, nor shared similar hobbies to me meant living together would have been extremely challenging. I must admit, I was more afraid of her not being attractive to me. I suffered a lot, constantly wondering and worrying about everything related to marriage. The night of the wedding ceremony, when I finally uncovered the mysterious red veil over her head, I was stunned and couldn't speak a single word to her for minutes.

I could tell from her bowed head that she was really shy and as uneasy as I was. "How was she so young and pretty?" I thought to myself and was more than amazed. We didn't say much throughout the night, however through very few words I could tell she was well-educated and recited various poems while talking. She sobbed for a while, and then became emotionless when we talked about our post-marriage life, refusing to say any words, no matter how many times I asked. From then I knew that this girl, my wife, at only the age of 16, had more courage and determination than I had ever expected before. It was from that moment my life completely rebounded.

Since I work for the court and occasionally serve the emperor directly, I must be loyal to him and obey his orders. I'm generally considered as a devoted, hardworking and efficient officer in the court by my co-workers, as well as the emperor. However, deep in my heart I am opposed to most of his proposals relating to military expense and his criteria of recruitment of officers. There are always bitter feelings to work hard for a system that requires altering. Worse still, I have been hiding my feelings and do not dare speak to anyone, including my friends and family, in case they will be put in danger and punished for my innovative ideas for the government.

A few months into our marriage, when Yi and I first began getting familiar with one another, I came to find out she is a girl full of vision. For so long she was so quiet, just paying attention to my propositions, making short comments based on my ideas. I was amazed at how our opinions resonated with each other's in various aspects. I looked forward to a revolution, a resounding one. I have been serving in court for 13 years, and despite all the contributions and sacrifices I've made for my beloved country, I did not receive a promotion, nor a single reward. Desperately eager for growth in my career towards a better position, I finally made up my mind, with the encouragement of Yi, to talk to the emperor, reporting recent significant events that happened throughout the country in order to give him a hint. As a result, he implied the appreciation of my contribution to the country but mentioned nothing related to a promotion. In such strict and depressed society, how was I going to change the current situation and bring a new look to the country?

There was a thing only Liu and I knew about. Being an intimate friend of mine for five years, I knew he always stood in the same line as me. He wanted to be an emperor, and I wanted to achieve something great. Getting tired of his big brother's autarchic control over the country, he, like me, was

also eager for a revolution. I secretly met him once or twice a week in his house, scheming to assassinate the emperor, and let Liu, my visionary friend inherit the Kingship and propose what we've always wanted for a brand new country. Determined to make a huge change, we made our way on a rainy night, sneaking into his restroom and strangled him to death, declaring that the now former emperor suffered from an acute, incurable disease. Naturally, Liu became the new emperor and I, unexpectedly, became one of his useless secretaries, in charge of only a department. This all took place too suddenly.

Yi was shocked about the old emperor's death. Neither of us had foreseen that the southern invaders were taking advantage of the new, inexperienced emperor and were planning to invade us. At this critical moment, I was surprisingly designated as the commanding officer of the war, preventing the invaders from crossing the border. I couldn't accept that I was going to the southern border and I was going to leave behind Jun, my one-year-old. I didn't even know if my survival in the war was guaranteed. So I rushed into Liu's chamber: "Why are you pushing me to the border and why exactly I was the only one of the secretaries of yours? Where have the days planning for a better country together gone?"

"I'm sorry," he replied sincerely, claiming he simply didn't want rumors to fly around and was afraid that it would bring both of us into trouble. "I want you to go to the south because you are the only person I can trust in here, and I know that you will handle it, and when you come back, I will definitely promote you to Senior Minister, I promise." I trusted in my dear friend and showed my appreciation by promising I would do my best in commanding the war.

The war lasted for three years. It did not kill me, but instead, made me stronger, and a more fearless man. I received Yi's

letters delivered by the postman riding a horse from time to time, usually every 2 months. He had to travel miles to deliver letters. The long distance wasn't easy. But in the last 5 months I hadn't been receiving her letters. I imagined she was tired of keeping contact with such an indifferent husband for such a long time, but I found myself busy fighting the enemies, so I didn't overthink. Mountains and rivers away, all that was on my mind was the promotion—to really contribute something for my beloved country. Arrows flying around, cannons rumbled, I did not cry and did not fear. When I finally got home with all the glory and victory, I saw a barren garden in front of our house. Gone was the previous vigor. It seemed different, however not because of the three years that had passed. I went in the house calling “Yi, Yi, Yi!”. My mother, who held my son in her hands, came out from the house abruptly. She burst out into tears and said: “She’s gone, an incurable disease.” I fell to the ground and lost all consciousness for minutes. I couldn't accept the fact that I lost my beloved wife, and it led me to think of the regrets I had. How I regret that I didn't stay by her side! How I regret that I didn't look back to hold her one last time! My heart was pierced by needles every moment I thought of her. My life seemed to fall, but I suddenly realized I might have had a cure for this aching soul when the promise of the emperor returned to my mind.

Having talked to him indirectly about my situation, I was more than desperate. Liu — who was now a respectful emperor and had the absolute power of the country in his hands — apparently made it clear that I was to be exiled to the far North in no more than 2 months, according to what people are buzzing. He didn't want any threats around him. Being afraid of his own replacement and being treated like the old emperor, my best friend, who had been refusing to meet me in person, was going to send me to that barren place, where snowflakes fell in the freezing winter. The goddamned new court, this goddamned new life! What kind

of emperor was he?! I shouldn't have dared to kill the old emperor. This is all that I'd been fighting for for so long, and this is what I deserve after all these years? Tears streamed down my face, all the way through my desperate and hollow soul. Only after one month's time, I was on the carriage to the far North, with my poor son, who lost his mother at such a young age.

All the thoughts were coming back to me. It has been ten years already. My son, Jun, has already grown up. I teach him to read and write every day, he can recite poems just like Yi did. It's Winter and we are surrounded by miles and miles of snow right now, yet the only thing I want to do is to look into her pretty eyes again. If I could go back in time, I would have said something to her right from the start.

Source Text:

江城子·乙卯正月二十日夜记梦

苏轼

十年生死两茫茫，不思量，自难忘。

千里孤坟，无处话凄凉。

纵使相逢应不识，尘满面，鬓如霜。

夜来幽梦忽还乡，小轩窗，正梳妆。

相顾无言，惟有泪千行。

料得年年肠断处，明月夜，短松冈。

Translation: Version 1:

A Dream of the Night of the 20th Day of the 1st Moon 1075

Su Shi

Ten years, by the living and the dead, we'd been set apart!

O Such a great void in our hearts!

I tried not to think about that,

But neither could I e'er forget.

A thousand miles away, your lone grave lies;
My deep sorrows, to whom I can confide?
E'en if we met again, you won't know me any more --
My face full of dust, my temple-hair hoar!
In a faint dream, I'm suddenly home, in the deep of night!
By the window fair,
You're combing your hair.
We stare at each other, not a sound --
Only endless tears come streaming down.
O Year after year, where is the source of my heart-break
plight?
More moon-lit nights, still...
Grave on short-pine hill.

Translation: Version 2

A Dream of the Night of the 20th Day of the 1st Moon 1075
Su Shi

For the long years the living of the dead knows nought,
Though to my mind not brought,
Could the dead be forgot?
Her lonely grave is far, a thousand miles away.
To whom can I my grief convey?
Revived even if she be, could she still know me?
My face is worn with care, And frosted is my hair.
Last night I dreamed of coming to my native place;
She was making up her face
Before her mirror with grace.
Each saw the other hushed,
But from our eyes tears gushed.
Can I not be heart-broken when I am awoken
From her grave clad with pines,
Where only the moon shines!

A Heart On A Cloud

Tang Chenk Ying Janice

My eyelids are half closed. I get off the bus with my heavy backpack, stand still at the bus stop, thinking of turning left or right. Left, I can go up there, visit the one I haven't seen for quite a while. Right, bed awaits, for some much-needed sleep. People keep passing by and I'm still standing like a dumb statue. "Maybe not now, I can go up tonight, or tomorrow." I choose right, something not so right. Beep beep beep, beep beep. Mom's calling. She does not speak at first, so I keep saying "hello" several times. When she finally opens her mouth, she says you fainted at the loo, cannot make it at last to the hospital. I hate the hospital.

When emptiness hits you, it makes itself the heaviest thing on you. I lay there shivering, unmoving but desperate to get away. The older I get, the 'busier' I am dealing with personal stuff. Do we really understand the meaning of being selfish? It is not until now I that I understand. You are selfish when you are busy hanging out with friends, doing part time jobs, watching YouTube... all personal stuff but not saving time for those you love. That is the utmost selfishness.

I hate the hospital, that artificial white and blurry light, antiseptic enough to suck me in one day. They say when one dies, all you can see is your memories, then the white light simply fades in, and lures you to sleep, forever. That's it, simple and easy. Did those white lights on the ceiling make you fall asleep only? Then I must paint the ceiling orange, let the sunbeam light warmly wake you up. Wake up! But there it is, that fragile white I'm staring at; no white has ever looked this disgusting. I tighten up my hair band, button up my

short and jacket... I feel safer in tighter clothes. There you are, gently lying down, pale, icy cold... but to me you seem more calming than any soul. It's just the sounds, the people, and the whiteness around you that makes you appear so chaotic. I stand there, not knowing how to deal with you. Who are you? I imitate the others when it comes to things I'm not familiar with, so this way nothing can be out of place. I watch each of them line up to get into the white blankets one by one. They walk slowly to your bedside with eye gazing on your pale face and the blanket on top of your body. They gently open the blanket of snow, take your fragile hand out and hold it tighter so that it can't go away, as if they could give you one last bit of warmth, to make sure it doesn't go wrong; then they kiss your forehead as if that is the one last touch. Isn't that how babies are tucked into bed? Parents kiss them to wish them sweet dreams, so they can sleep better, just like you; then they come closer to your shoulder, muttering words into your ears, as if they can ask you to come back home, for us again to feel warmth. Home is where you are with me and now I have lost my way back.

Going up to your place used to be my daily routine. When I was 6, I finished school, went up to you, changed into comfy clothes, washed cabbages and cut carrots for dinner together and watched TV under the dim yellow light, because I remember you said to only turn on the light when everyone is here and ready for dinner. So, we had dinner together, and watched Korean dramas, your all-time favorites. On weekends we went wherever you wanted. For some shrimp and sprout dumplings, rice rolls, whatever hot food we could buy; we went to the sea front, because you liked the sea, you could stand there all day watching the ships sailing. When I was 12, I finished school, headed right to the pool for training, went up to you for dinner and watched TV only. Weekends were still all about shrimp and sprout dumplings

and the sea, good stuff, good days, good old days. When I was 18, I started to say, "I'm not coming back for dinner tonight." How did you feel then? Did you get sad or ever disappointed with me? I'm sure you did, or else you would not call me at late night just to make sure I reached home.

I stand next to you, finally just you and me inside those white blankets. Oh white, not again. Just like how we used to make dinners together, just you and me. So, I do what they do. I hold your hand; when did it get so bony? I kiss your forehead; ouch, a frostbite to my lip. People said those with big foreheads always live longer with a brighter future. I put my mouth next to your ears, figuring out what to say. "I love you", I whisper; alas, why is it that we love saying the most important words to those we love when they can no longer hear them. Is it possible that maybe you can hear me? I put my fingers onto your face, running down every part of it, from top to bottom. After all the years there is not much hair left, barely some greyish ones here and there. Those wrinkles on you are like ripples on the sea, I want to rub them away but they are the unmovable parts of me. You are so missed!

I leave the hospital and try to get my mind back. Clouds are moving; every second the sky changes hue. One moment a cloud is in the center of my gaze, next, it's not. The cloud right in front of me just slips away before I close my hand. I see nothing but my palm. Right, nothing stays, no one stays, not even you. The clouds keep on going scudding across the sky, leaving my eyesight one by one. "But the same cloud will never stay in the same place?" I ask myself. Sad truth.

Yet the sadness is still sitting in my lungs, a feeling of not knowing what I am feeling. That night I learn a new word—*Nyctophilia*¹. I want the darkness to swallow me, so I can feel the stillness. I feel everything in my bones when all I can hear is my heart beating in my ears, gross. You have to know your enemy so you can protect yourself. But I'm never told that my enemy is right an inch deep within me. A few hours ago, I talked about tomorrow, but now where is my tomorrow? What if I crawl back to you, will you come back? I should have done everything as if there's no tomorrow. If I keep my eyes closed, everything feels just like you, looks just like you. Now you go away from me, bringing tiny pieces of me away too, how can I ever live as a whole without you? But I can't stop reminiscing. I just don't have enough strength anymore. Serial killers keep some sort of trophies from their victims; I can't even get the last glimpse of your wide-open eyes. If I have chosen left, then maybe things could turn right and I could learn to live right. Right, nothing goes right. We can only grow old. Day by day without you next to me, emptiness starts eating me up alive. How am I supposed to deal with that knowledge?

I look into the sky and clouds are all over again, moving, leaving. I start wondering where these beautiful images will go, like the rainbow should have an end too. I go behind the clouds, to chase them. At the near end, there's a steep slope. I stop and stand, watching the clouds fall into it. I run over and push the clouds back; I don't want them to leave me behind. I keep telling them it's dangerous ahead, but the wind urges them on. One by one they pass through my body, not listening to my words and dive right into the slope. What can I do? I sit on the edge alone again, just me, myself and I. They dump me; everything that I have been trying to keep

¹ (n.) Love of darkness or night, finding relaxation or comfort in darkness

By Lingnan University Students

with me leaves me. Suddenly, a cloud pushes me down the slope with it instead of passing through me. I am again together with the clouds, like a travelling companion on a journey to an unknown paradise. My skin is gradually getting moist, clouds start disappearing, turning into tiny drops. We drop faster and faster, too fast. Where are they?

I sit on the edge of my bed, and a sunbeam hits straight on my forehead. I put a chamomile tea bag into my cup, watching the water drop from the tap, faster and faster. I pour a cup of chamomile tea, to calm myself down from the dream a bit. I love drinking my tea at the balcony, to begin everyday with the sun and the breeze. The breeze suddenly catches my chamomile tea, making thousands of ripples on the surface of the tea. I see something else besides the ripple, something extraordinarily beautiful, cloud like substance...oh, they are the clouds I saw last night, and they are all here...now. All my clouds come back to me; I can see my clouds in my tea! Moving clouds are actually more beautiful than I could possibly imagine. You are, and always have been here, with me. Anywhere, anyway I will love you.

This piece is a gift to my beautiful grandmother who has the most generous heart in the world. Thanks for loving me since my first day in this world. I wish you well in the happiest place now:) "You look into the sky and you see a beautiful cloud, the cloud becomes rain, and when you drink your tea, you can see your cloud in your tea." -- Thich Nhat Hanh. Perhaps the sadness is what keeps us alive, we all live in broken fragile pieces to survive, don't we? Heart gains the ability to heal itself now, just as my heart grows stronger day by day. I miss you.

Reflection:

The poem "Head, Heart" is adapted into a short story, a relatively free adaptation in my opinion. This short story marks my first experience on facing death a year ago. I would

like to ask my grandmother not to worry about me anymore because I am gradually getting better. Since the poem is rather short, no omission is used. Addition is used though to create a homodiegetic narrator “I” (i.e. the narrator is also a character inside the story). She as the one, who owns both Head and Heart allowing her to fully describe the experience she has been through, to make sense of the feeling of facing death. By using techniques like first person narration and present tense, readers are invited to walk this journey with the narrator; they can see vivid image (i.e. inside hospital, late night thoughts) brought to them. My grandmother used to show me various Chinese rhyming words and sang a lot of songs she learned at school, thus I incorporate phonological devices like rhymes in my short story as well.

The hardest part would be not being able to find the right word for the feeling, though I understand that better language requires regular readings and writings. I gave my best though to describe how I really felt, by finding synonyms of words on Dictionary.com, which is a nice tool to write short story also, allowing people like me who lacks vocabulary to stay away from an over-repetitive piece. If I were to start this assignment over, maybe I would add in the grandmother’s perspective through conversation between the narrator and the grandmother. It could be inspiring to have all the narrator’s question answered by her grandmother, to get another approach to facing death and dealing with the pain.

Through the short story, I would like to remind readers that rationality is not the only solution to sadness; we could, instead let the sadness in and nurture us. That is why the ending of the short story is different from the poem: heart does not need the help of head to complete; it is strong enough to grow on its own.

The Expiator
Cindy Lam Hiu Man

The Sick Wife
by Jane Kenyon
(appearing in *The New Yorker*, 1996)

The sick wife stayed in the car
while he bought a few groceries.
Not yet fifty,
she had learned what it's like
not to be able to button a button.

It was the middle of the day—
and so only mothers with small children
and retired couples
stepped through the muddy parking lot.

Dry cleaning swung and gleamed on hangers
in the cars of the prosperous.
How easily they moved—
with such freedom,
even the old and relatively infirm.

The windows began to steam up.
The cars on either side of her
pulled away so briskly
that it made her sick at heart.

(story)

I am Jane. H. I am a writer. I'm so bored staying in the car
that I am now writing down my story on a piece of paper
using my trembling hand. Waiting for my husband while he
buys a few groceries from the supermarket is the only thing
I can do on every Tuesday. I am not even fifty years old, but
I have learnt what is like not to be able to button a button. I

just wonder if you can guess what has happened to me. I was diagnosed with lung cancer one year ago and I am no longer living in this world. It drives my husband and me to sheer desperation. I have no choice but to get used to this weak body and the harsh reality. Then, I start thinking of a question: Why me? Maybe it is a joke God is playing on me or maybe it is a retribution for my crime.

I remember the first time I met Derek, it was my second year as a writer. The book I wrote was refused by many publishers that one of them told me 'I appreciate your style of writing but your story is so ordinary.' His words really frustrated me and I usually sat in the park all-day long and tried to get some creative inspiration. On one sunny day, Derek came into my sight like a savior. He gave his drawing to me and said that I looked very depressed and he hoped it cheered me up. He was a little short but he held himself with confidence. The broad smile on his face and the sunshine embracing him made him extremely attractive. I could hardly focus on our conversation because new ideas kept emerging in my mind when I looked at his face. Undoubtedly, he was destined to be my muse. But good times always pass by quickly. His wife and daughter came and the smiles on their faces seemed to tell me they are a happy family. My heart sank when he introduced his wife, Jenny and his lovely daughter, Lily to me. I have already missed the chance of falling in love with him when I was struggling in the world of writing. Even though I wrote about the fact that it was almost impossible to covet his admiration, I fell inextricably in love. In order to get closer to Derek, I found all possible ways to approach him. I even made friends with Jenny and engaged in their family activities to become involved in Derek's life. I know my love will come to light sooner or later, but it was too late to cut myself free from the obsession with him.

Several months later, Jenny eventually smelt something fishy so she asked me whether I was a secret admirer of Derek or

not. She said that she often saw the aggressive look from my eyes that I loved him. When I stared back at Jenny, my mind was full of hesitation and compunction. She treated me sincerely as her best friend and I did not have the heart to tell her my true thought. I resolved to tell her a white lie that nothing happened between Derek and me. Unluckily, she still remained doubtful after listening to my explanation so she refused to let me visit them since then. I suffered greatly from not seeing my muses. She deprived me of my writing inspiration. She was such a rigid woman who ruined my life! Suddenly, a voice hovered in my head and said 'If only Jenny dies, I can win back Derek's heart.' I stubbornly considered this was the only way and I put it into practice. I told Jenny and Lily that I was about to move away and I prepared a present for them and we met up in a forest. In the forest, I killed them. Their corpses were found several days later but the policemen did not find out the culprit. The ecstasy of not being arrested totally overwhelmed the sense of shame. When I calmed down, I could not believe what I had done to Derek and his family. But soon, the greed for success seduced me to the wrong track again.

Without Jenny's interference, I approached Derek again. He looked desperate but ironically, I drew inspiration from him. I filled Jenny's place alongside him and comforted his pain like the scenes in a romantic movie. In Derek's eyes, I was a gentle woman who was his great consolation. We fell in love and got married several years later. With Derek's encouragement my work went well with infinite incentives. My writing career even reached the peak with a constant flow of ideas and I became more and more well-known as a writer. However, my domesticity did not go well as my career did. Derek was so eager to have our own children so am I, but I dared not. Lily's face of hatred was imprinted in my mind which woke me with a start frequently. I was so afraid that the babies I would bear would all be the spitting image of Lily so the idea of having kids was then dismissed.

Oh! The sunlight is shining in my eyes. It has been mid-day as I've been writing this, a weekday so only mothers with small children and retired couples can be found in the supermarket. Looking out from the window, I see some dry-cleaning swinging and gleaming on hangers in the cars of the prosperous owners. People all look so delighted even they are stepping through the muddy parking lot- except me. Even the elderly and the infirm are more fleet-footed than me. Every footprint they leave is the trace of freedom and the freedom of my soul sunk long ago.

I have to be honest with myself: I have never felt happy since I committed murder. Possessing Derek brings success to my life but I cannot enjoy its sweet smell because those fragments of that good time with Jenny and Lily cling to my heart and occupy my thoughts at any moment. It is absurd that when I heard that I got cancer, the guilty conscience lurking deep inside my heart was relieved and my face relaxed into a smile. It is the sense of guilt driving me to desperation instead of the illness. I know one day I have to make retribution for my crime and this day has finally come. Goodbye Derek.

Folding up the paper, I pull the pipe attached to the car exhaust toward me in the front seat and wait for the end of my life. The windows begin to steam up and the cars on either side of me are pulling away so briskly which makes me sick at heart 'If only everything can start over again, my life would be so different...'

Bright Moon in the Water of a Brook

Chenny, Chae Lin KIM

It was a windy spring night in the Gangwon² province in 1530. Byeok Gyesoo was walking down the street running through the market. He heard two merchants from Gye Seong³ talking about something. As Byeok did not want to show that he was curious, he just stood on the far side of the street and started to listen to their conversation.

“Do you know about a Kisaeng ⁴named Hwang Jinyi?”

“Of course, I know her! She is the most famous Kisaeng in the whole country! I saw her in the streets yesterday!!”

“Really? Is she really that beautiful, like the rumour has it?”

“Yes! The rumour is totally true. She looks just like a single lotus flower from the water, I couldn’t take my eyes off her...”

“Oh, really?... I also want to see her myself!”

It was the first time for Byeok to hear of Hwang Jinyi. He did not know what it was, but he felt something going on in his mind. His heart started to get warm and thought ‘Ummmm... Lotus Flower...’. Although he had never seen her, not even once, Byeok felt some kind of attraction towards her.

Byeok was the richest man in the whole Gangwon province. Everyone envied him thinking that he was living a perfect life as a member of the royal family. He was a grandson of

² East part of South Korea, next to Seoul

³ Modern Seoul

⁴ Female entertainers who were good at dancing, singing, arts, writing poems to served men in the Korea history

King Sejong⁵, but as his grandmother was concubine, his family members had been living outside the palace since he was young. Though he did not live inside the palace, life was actually extremely pleasant and comfortable. Byeok always cared so much about what others thought. Thus, he always showed off and bragged about being from a royal family and about how smart and rich he was.

However, Byeok was never truly satisfied inside his mind with the life he was leading. What he was thinking, and acting were different. What he was showing to the world was not his true self. He always thought it embarrassing to be a royal family member who cannot live in the palace. On top of that, he had to work for the government because his family had experienced some financial crisis. Although no one cared about him that much, he was always worried about what people might think. Because of his personality; not being able to express himself, he had not felt any true love or affection for anyone. The affection that he was feeling towards Hwang Jinyi was his first emotion.

Byeok did not know what to do with his feelings towards Hwang Jinyi, whom he had never met, not even once. He just could not stop thinking about her. Next morning, he decided to leave for Gye Seong to see Hwang Jinyi. He wanted to be sure about his feeling just for one time, as it was the first time for him to feel that way for anyone.

When he arrived in Gye Seong, it was already dark. Byeok was tired from his long journey. He had ridden on horseback to Won⁶ seeing white dandelion leaves floating through the

⁵ King who ruled Korea from 1418 to 1450

⁶ Form of Hotel for Government Officers during this era

air. When he arrived inside the gate, he stepped down from his horse. There was a man waiting for his arrival.

“How was your trip, Sir?”

“It was fine. You have a room for me, right?”

“Of course, sir. We will take care of the horse. You can go inside and spend some time with your brothers from the palace.”

“Okay.”

Byeok felt hesitant to go inside as all his brothers were from different mothers from his own. He did not even know every brother. He just wanted to go inside and sleep, but he knew that he had to show respect for his brothers. Going into the bright room out of the dark, Byeok forced a smile on his face.

“Hello, it has been so long since I have seen you hyungnims⁷” Byeok greeted his brothers bowing his head down slightly.

“I missed you so much, brother. It is so good to see you. Why don’t you visit more often?” the second oldest brother answered grinning but without warmth.

“I have a lot of work back there, hyungnim.”

“What are you doing?” another brother asked in doubt.

“He is working for the government. Is that right Byeok?”

A brother at the far side of the room answered the question for Byeok.

⁷ Very formal way of calling older brother in Korean (hyungnims is plural form of hyungnim)

“Yes. he works for the government. Sit down and enjoy the food and drink, brother.”

The second oldest brother made Byeok sit in front of him.

“Thank You. Hyungnim.”

Byeok could feel the awkwardness in the air from the moment he sat down. He felt like he was in a place which did not suit him. Although he was also a grandson of King Sejong like all other brothers in the room, he felt like he was not one of them. Byeok just ate and ate to get rid of the awkward ambience. While he was eating, other brothers started to talk again to each other, as if Byeok was not even there.

“So, what makes you come here?”

Another brother sitting next to Byeok asked him the question. Byeok was actually glad that someone talked to him.

“Just to look around... I wasn't here for a long time.”

“Just to look around?”

“Just look around and have some rest, hyungnim.”

“Is there anything you want to see in Gyeseong?”

“Ummm...” Byeok felt hesitant about asking about Hwang Jinyi as he did not want to show any emotion. “Do you know where I can see Hwang Jinyi?” While he was thinking, his words came out first.

“How do you know about Hwang Jinyi? She must be really famous all over the country.”

The brother sitting next to him answered with loud laughter.

“Talking about Jinyi??”

The second oldest brother spoke in surprise.

“I am really close to her. Do you want me to talk to her? I can arrange a place for you guys to meet. She is a really charming woman.”

Byeok already answered “Yes! Of course!” deep within his mind. However, he could not. “It’s okay. Thank you.”

“Do you some relationship with Hwang Jinyi?”

“No... no... Of course not. I have not even seen her.”

“I think you have some affection for her. Haha. Tell us the truth, Byeok. If you want to know more about Hwang Jinyi, you can go to her friend Yidal and ask her about Hwang Jinyi?” asked another brother one more time laughing out loud.

“Never. Even if Hwang Jinyi comes to me and tries to seduce me, I will never ever fall into her trap.”

Byeok spoke in anger. He did not even know why he was angry.

“You think you can? Haha”

Everyone in the room started to laugh at him. This made Byeok even angrier.

“I tell you hyungnims. I will never fall in love with her Never.”

Byeok suddenly stood in anger and walked out of the room. He was never supposed to leave the room like that in a room full of his royal family brothers, out of respect. However, he just couldn’t suppress his anger any more. Maybe his feeling

towards Hwang Jinyi, mattered more than the formal 'respect' he owed them. Byeok went inside his room and slept right away. He did not want to think about anything.

Next day, Byeok woke up early in the morning. He felt some regret for his actions the night before, but forgot about it with thoughts of Hwang Jinyi in just a few seconds. He prepared to go out to see Yidal, Hwang Jinyi's friend. Byeok felt his mind fluttering, thinking of the woman.

Byeok went down a few streets to see Yidal in Kisaeng Place. It was first time for him to that kind of place. He felt little nervous, but he tried hard not to show his nervousness. A young girl sweeping the ground came to talk to Byeok.

"Is there anything you need, sir?"

"Umm... Can I see Yidal?"

"This early in the morning? I will talk to her. Please wait here."

"Okay. I will wait."

Byeok looked around him. He wandered around the garden, looking down at the floor. He did not want to people who he knew or to know that he was there. He thought it was really embarrassing to come all the way to Gyeseong to see a girl, and that he would never tell anyone about this. However, he knew that his affection towards Hwang Jinyi was true. Byeok just wanted to see Hwang Jinyi.

After a few minutes, when Byeok was inside his deep daydream, Yidal came out of a room. She saw Byeok in the far side of the garden and called him.

"Excuse me, Mr. Byeok. You can come in now."

Byeok turned his head suddenly, not knowing how Yidal could know his name. He thought for a while but decided not to bother about it. He walked towards the room.

“Oh. Okay. I will go in.”

Byeok took off his shoes and went inside the room, nervous.

“Please sit. I heard you want to know about Hwang Jinyi.”

“Yes... I don't know what to say... I just want to see her one time. Can you tell me where I can meet her?”

“Ah. You must be in real love with Hwang Jinyi. Are you?”

Byeok hesitated to answer. He wanted to say that he was in love with Hwnag Jinyi as it was his true feeling. However, he felt uneasy about showing his emotion. He thought for a few seconds. Then he decided to tell Yidal about his true emotion, so that she could help him.

“Yes... Kind of... From what I heard, although I have not met her even once, I just cannot stop thinking about her.”

Byeok felt a kind of freshness when he showed what was in his mind for the first time.

“Ah-Ha. There are so many men from the whole country, wanting to see Hwang Jinyi. I usually don't tell them where to meet her. However, as it seems like you have a very special feeling towards her. I will tell you where you can meet her.”

“Oh... Thank You.”

“Go to the bridge next to Hwang Jinyi's house, on horseback tonight. You can wait there for Hwang Jinyi and when she comes, she will follow you from the back. You should never turn back until the end of the bridge.”

Byeok found many things about Yidal's instruction weird. He wanted to ask, but he just decided to follow Yidal's instructions.

"Okay. I will never turn back."

"Good. I really hope Hwang Jinyi will find true love finally." Yidal smiled slightly and left the room.

Byeok felt a little strange, but his desire to meet Hwang Jinyi was stronger than anything. He left the room and went to the market and bought new clothes to prepare for the meeting, returning to his room to think about what he was going to say. Byeok was just so happy about thinking about Hwang Jinyi. He felt like the time was passing to slowly.

When sunset finally came, Byeok rode to the bridge whistling with joy. His heart started to beat faster and faster as he got closer. He arrived at the edge of bridge when the sky was finally pitch-black. He could not wait to see Hwang Jinyi. He waited and waited, watching the stars in the sky.

Byeok heard a horse's hooves behind him. He repeated to himself 'I should never, never turn back. I will never turn back.' The hooves got louder and louder, Byeok's heart beating faster and faster.

When Hwang Jinyi arrived, Byeok wanted to turn to see her, but he restrained himself. He started to cross the bridge slowly and Hwang Jinyi followed him. When they reached almost the half of the bridge, Hwang Jinyi stopped and Byeok also stopped. Hwang Jinyi started to recite a poem to Byeok in a rather soft and cynical voice.

Water of a brook in a deep mountain, don't show off yourself for flowing far easily.

By Lingnan University Students

*As it is hard for you to come back to the deep mountain when you reach
the wide ocean,*

*Wouldn't it be nice for you to rest with me for a while in this fine dark
night full of bright moon?*

When Byeok heard this poem, he felt his heart stopping like a stone and coldness in his blood. He could not move. Then, he turned to see Hwang Jinyi. Seeing her face, Byeok fell off the horse. Byeok could really see a beautiful and pure lotus flower pictured in her face. Falling on the ground, Byeok quickly looked up to Hwang Jinyi. She smiled and said in calm voice.

“Mr. Byeok. Your love is just like the wind. It is not true love.”

Byeok could not say anything and Hwang Jinyi simply rode away.

After a few months, Byeok heard that Hwang Jinyi and Yidal planned everything to fool him, from the bridge to the poem, angry after hearing what Byeok said to his brothers.

“Never. Even if Hwang Jinyi comes to me and tries to seduce me, I will never ever fall in love with her.”

Poetry

By Lingnan University Students

An Ode to Climbing

David McKenna

I love rocks.

not the ones that
Wellesley wives
wear on their fingers,
to show off their wealth,

but the kind with facets
so immense,

so loud yet so quiet,
that you can't help
but try and conquer
their vertical faces
and better understand them.

using quickdraws and cams,
you fight to the top
where you find
absolutely nothing,

and somehow feel
filthy rich.

An Old Friend

Carmen Lee Nga Man

Pete and I are wise
He, a guy with a logical mind
Yet he is a very diverse man of a kind
He explores the world with a critical sense as do I
Passing through a tranquil rural road
becomes one of our habitual routes
Out of the blue, a storm covers the woods
Our steps blown to dust
so Pete and I were lost
Somehow it blows us apart
but it is not to blame
As a flying bird would never stop
Until the modest one is hurt
The storm sets a fire
That ignites my wings
My body is stamped with a reddish black stain
By no means can I cure such pain
The fire leads Pete to the other end
Where he meets my other
She encourages him to soar to the sky
He tries and they fly up high
At last, they fall onto an apple tree
I doubt my fate will never assure me
Until my wounds be healed
I stay in the ashes and am still
But it cannot drown out what is real
In my most wishful dream,
he settles near the old refreshing stream
Once again, by my side
With those once familiar dark eyes
Staring into mine
A speechless conversation is launched out of our desires,
The bitter sweet
Though everything has changed
It is always an inevitable and an inescapable joy to see
An "old friend"

By Lingnan University Students

Haikus

Carmen Lee Nga Man

[A mother-to-be]
A mother-to-be
Awaiting to the moment
Happiest and blessed

[Blossoms in the wild]
Blossoms in the wild
To bloom or be picked to fall
Petals hide no more

[Humans and History]
Humans and History
Painful sacrifices made
Time suffers the most

[A lamp on the street]
A lamp on the street
Shinning on strangers below
Lighting fools to death

[Kindness is a knife]
Kindness is a knife
It murders us yet protects
World becomes a mess

To Those Victims In Syria
Children and women
Sobbing, suffering, dying
Weapons, guns and fire

[A Hong Kong bus ride]

Desmond TAN Kai Teck

Screens lighting up seats.

People chatting loud on phones,

disturbing quick dreams.

By Lingnan University Students

Four Seasons *By Stephanie Gurung*

Spring

Blissful, and sweet, and shy
It couldn't help but blossom
All it took was one look in the eye
For you to illumine the dim
In the season of new beginnings
We decided to give it a try

Summer

Moments we won't forget
Even when we need a cane
My hand in yours I didn't regret
As we walk down the quiet lane
Enjoying sunsets, ice cream, the beach
And long kisses in the pouring rain

Autumn

But then it turned chilly
And the days were now darker
Then you asked if I had yearned to flee
You said that I was your anchor
Wrapped me in your protective embrace
And promised that it'd all be okay

Winter

It only got colder
The winds became much harsher
So we snuggled before the fire
But blankets don't make things better
And what we can no longer deny
Is that the flower is now wilted

Four Seasons

But no one is to blame
Neither of us were prepared
The change in weather put us to shame
I'll never forget what we shared
Though Mother Nature planned
For our tale to end at four seasons

How I Knew I Didn't Love You

By Stephanie Gurung

It was all those nights when you would call
Your low gentle voice excited to hear my quiet one
Saying that with me you're not afraid to fall
While all I could think of was "these phone calls were a
burden"

It was your crave to be intimate
Opening up your innocent mind and soul to the heartless
"The smell of your perfume can intoxicate"
You said, as you took a step closer, making me chuckle

It was when we watched the sun set
You said you could not picture being there with someone
else
And that while with me, the whole world you forget
But I could see myself there again, with a shadow, not you

It was your desire to marry
When you took my hands in yours and far away your mind
wandered
You saw a white wedding in January
I stood frozen in place, unable to see what you could

It was the sense of relief I felt
That day I finally called it off for both of our sakes
Causing so much pain that on the ground you knelt
But I knew I didn't love you, not the way you loved me

By Lingnan University Students

Poems

Charlotte Chong

Guess what

You give me my shape

You smash me into cake

You dump me into trash.

- play doh

Trace

Rubber erases black dots, leave the white mark

Scar gel flattens keloids, leave the surgery speck

Tissue wipes away tears, leaving the redness.

Various Poems

Kamal-Preet-Kaur

Cage

Captive in the invincible cage of her mind,
She bangs her charred hand
On the steel rods, with all her might.

The sleek silver rails gleam in the sun
Making the cage sparkle like a box of treasure-
Containing something precious,
For safekeeping perhaps.

Little does anyone know,
it homes a wounded and shattered illusion mirror and
a bleeding girl
with bits of broken glass in her skin,
a big shard jagged in the centre of her skull.

She wasn't always worthless
But you know it's true
Things decay with time
She did too... and
You, you and you all have a hand in it.

Composure

Blood oozing from my ears.
My million silent outbursts.
A dying wildfire in my eyes.
The busted yet held high nose.
A straight face you see.

Blurred faces and tunnelling voices.
My throat is a painful rock.
Keeping glistening eyes from overflowing,
My mouth a tight lock.
A soul on the verge of breaking.
Unable to even talk,
A stubborn ego is all you see?

Burning eyes and self-pity overwhelm,
I heave as the chlorine dulls my mind.
Exhale and inhale,
I breathe out the devil.
Dabbing under my eyes,
I let the tissue soak.
Crossing arms over myself,
I try to make the panic subside.
Freshening my face with a sprinkle of water,
I practice smiling in the mirror, apply lip stain.
A routine behind closed bathroom door.

Various Poems by *Emma Chau Nga Wing*

3:17 a.m. Saint Petersburg

(Version one)
Russians fast asleep,
Crows endlessly scream,
Drunk men recklessly curse,
The Sun gently rises,
And,
A visitor in her mum's dress,
Quietly wanders.

(Version two)
Russians sleeping,
Crows screaming,
Drunk men cursing,
The Sun rising,
And,
A visitor in her mum's dress,
Wandering.

Hooman's dream

Push, push!
Creatures make space.
Hooman enters the lift,
And presses 'door close'.

Meow, meow!
She lowered her head.
Stands me, the wounded kitten,
At her feet.

Pat, pat!
On my soft fur.
I sat elegantly like a princess,
Swaying my head.

Purr, purr!
Staring into her eyes.
The tip of my tail,
Purrfectly bends.

Bite, bite!
My bites form a circle.
Blood flows like fountains,
Round her ankle.

Ouch, ouch!
Hooman screams.
What have I done?
She stops the lift.

Plurkh, plurkh!
Camera shutters.
Creatures capture portraits,
Of hooman running away.

Ding, ding!
The lift door opens.
Hooman don't run!
Your blood's flooding the hallway.

Down, down.
My Hooman falls
She sees the silhouette on the wall
Bigger, and Bigger I grow
From a kitten
To a cat
To a lion
That swallows herself.

Various Poems *by Tooba Kousar*

Scars

Darling,

Pain is not as simple as the bruises you get on your arms or knees.

It's beyond that, and it's Brutal. Powerful. Destructive.

It is,
the wounds cut deep into your skin,
and those, my love, will take ages to heal,
and the scars of them won't ever leave.

Monsters

The monsters residing in my head,
are now too much for my soul to bear.

The sounds that they make,
I wonder why no one else can hear.

They scream,
they thump,
they stab,

I cry,
I yell,
I whine,

The never-ending explosion in my head,
I wonder if it will only stop when I am dead.

Is it too much to ask for?

It's late at night, and my mind, like always continues to wander.

There's noise in my head that I fail to recognize, but I know it's loud, and painful.

Yet, no one else can hear it, again no one, but me.

I fail to understand what's going on, and it's driving me
crazy.
I want to yell, I want to scream, I want to let all the pain
out;
So I can breathe. in peace.
I wish to end this suffering. Someone hand in the remote to
me please!
I want someone to please help me turn off the volume of
whatever that is in my head,
I wish I could do that myself, but I can't and it's very
strange.

I want my brain to please stop processing for a while, so
that it can be a little quiet.
Ah, it's been a while since I've been in peace.
And now if I ask for it, is it too much to ask for?

My Identity

They call me a multilingual, with a smirk on their face.
and show abhorrence as my father says he's from another
race,
I wonder if they understood the pain when he said,
that he tried adjusting in an international hub that never
truly welcomed my dad.

Ask me anything and I will answer you immediately,
But questioning my identity will only numb me completely.

I call myself a Hongkonger,
as I scream in Cantonese.
Yes, my heart is a local,
but remember, I also bleed green!

A Poem by *Chui Ming Wai*

My dear
Don't be afraid of final year
As everything will be better
Don't be afraid of tears
As you can turn all the difficulties over
Please treasure your dear
As they are always your supporter
Say goodbye to your student year
As you will become much prettier

By Lingnan University Students

Poetry Collection

By Hadarah Kane Alcantara Palencia

Nevertheless, take me.

I break down in fragments
For your vanity
Type and erase
My entity
I'm a novelty, you see

My useless ramblings
For your insincerity
Do you love me?
If I cast out the candle,
Could you still see me?
Me, in all my gravity

Every part of me
Yearning for your charity
Not everything, my dear
Just enough
To retain my sanity

Just enough to keep you close to me
Not for a moment,
Not for a minute,
Not for a second,
But for a fragment, take me.

poems and poetry

You see I do not live and breathe
Beautiful poetry
I do not bloom in summer and spring
I gasp on it
Choking on its ends
Throwing up on vowels
Coughing up rhymes

I do it with tied hands
Heartbeat faster than a 10 on a treadmill
Pleading for a flower on carved skin
I do it in tears
Groaning and moaning
Wondering, a blank page taunting me

I do not float on clouds
I scream till I'm numb
My only escape
Is the ink dripping from my tongue

By Lingnan University Students

Oil on Canvas

by Vanessa Yeung

Basic visitors queue up like snakes for Art Central entry.
Unlike those tickets that bear the same name,
My two magnetic strips are truly complimentary.

Der Grüne Rasen hanging heaven-high on the wall,
Escaping the tickles and pokes of curious toddlers but
Dear Artist, there's a word in your tongue called *Unfall*.

Day after day are the products of my sacrifice at the pier—
My mercy and self-control for the passers-by!
Long lost lawn! Feeling homesick, I need no gear,

Spraying, bombing, paint piling— warmth, texture and
randomness!
While I am adding the finishing touch, River Chroma stops
Flowing; fluffy rocks start making a fuss.

The gallerist's Louboutins match with the colour of her fist.
Moving my head to and fro, oh my gleaming eyes— A
harmless tease.

Gugugu-gugugu-gugugu-GUTGUTGUT!

There stands my *Schadenfreude* under the light beam.
Above the spotlight, I too have my red feet gripping the
balance beam.

Personal Essays & Non-Fiction

Glass: A Beauty in the Haystacks
(Warning: MAJOR SPOILERS)

By Desmond Tan

Glass is a retelling of the modern superhero genre, and a breath-taking ending to the modern superhero thriller trilogy. Though it had received poor critical responses from recognized critics such as IGN and Rotten Tomato, it probably stands as one of the best modern suspense trilogies created by the filmmaker and actor Mr. M. Night Shyamalan.

The movie picks up two weeks or so from the second movie *Split* of the unexpected *Unbreakable* trilogy (The first being *Unbreakable*, then *Split*, and finally *Glass*). The movie reintroduces the three main characters of the trilogy: The Horde a.k.a. Kevin Wendall Crumb (played by James McAvoy), Mr. Glass (Played by Samuel L. Jackson) and David Dunn (Played by Bruce Willis). The Horde, first introduced in *Split*, is in fact the combination of 23 different personalities that “lives” inside Kevin. This is due to Kevin suffering from a psychological disorder known as Dissociative Identity Disorder, which causes the brain to act as more than one personality, with different emotions and even memories. Meanwhile, Mr. Glass (Elijah Price) is a person with incredible IQ but suffers from Osteogenesis Imperfecta, which makes his body extremely fragile, hence the nickname “Glass”. David Dunn, on the other hand, is a person with incredible strength who can literally “bend steel”. He also possesses the ability to “see” dark intentions from potential criminals simply by touching them while walking. Both David and Mr. Glass are introduced in the first movie *Unbreakable*. The movie begins after The Horde has escaped from the authorities for kidnapping and killing two high school girls. The story progresses with the inevitable capture of the protagonist (David) and two antagonists (The Horde and Elijah). They are locked in a highly-secured mental institute where psychiatrist Dr Ellie Staples is tasked

with treating them in three days. She states she is an expert in the field of Delusional Grandeur, referring to mental patients who believe they have superpowers. She tries convincing them they are not superhumans with supernatural powers. But Mr. Glass does not believe that and in the end proves they in fact are superhuman. The three die in the end, with a plot twist that Staples is in fact an agent sent in by a secret society to seek and destroy these talented individuals to keep mankind docile. Though she was thwarted in the end because Glass knows of her hidden identity and managed to keep a record of David and The Horde's supernatural fight online and expose themselves to the world, proving that superhumans do exist and encouraging them to step forward.

Firstly, unlike the Marvel and Disney hero movies that we are so familiar with, Shyamalan uses an unusual approach to these modern superhero movies: Suspense. Every shot seems deliberate and calculated. In the scene where Dr Staples confronts the three, instead of letting the camera stand still taking in the entire conversation, shots frequently move to and from each of the actors. There are also many close-ups throughout the film. This technique can be found in many suspense films, the most notable would perhaps be *The Silence of the Lambs*, where a famous scene between Hannibal and Clarice fully utilizes this technique of single close-ups during conversations. This amplifies the effect of dominance of one speaker over the other, while also portraying a stream of emotion that would be showing on the actors' face while he/she is speaking. That way we get a clearer sense of what he/she is thinking and as to who is the prey and the predator. The close-ups also feel very claustrophobic, we as the audience are restrained by the lack of objects. We are literally forced to pay attention to the character.

Another feature would be the film's color and lighting choices. The feeling that the film is trying to portray here is very dark and gloomy, which is unlike usual superhero films. Take for example *Black Panther*, a popular Oscar nominee of 2018-19, adopts very colorful shots, from the beautiful green fields of Wakanda to the vivid night lights along the streets and roads of Seoul. These choices of lightings bombard our senses with beautiful imagery along with stunning special effects, these capture our attention and take the audiences' breath away. However, in *Glass*, most of the actions take place at night, in a dark room, a dilapidated cement factory and the sterile confinements of the mental institute. The choice of environment gives audience that feeling of segregation and hopelessness, seemingly a metaphor for the states of the three characters. This style resonates with the *film noir*, which utilizes the dark and grey lightings to portray pessimism, menace and dread.

There is also another interesting shot, a scene where David's son, Joseph Dunn (Played by Spencer Treat Clark) storms out of the Institute after having confronted Dr Ellie about his father's condition. (Here she tries to convince Joseph, who believed that his father is truly invincible, that his father is just suffering from delusional grandeur.) His frustration could be shown by a shot from the above and slowly turning upside down as Joseph marched to his van. This is as if his world has been turned upside down while he struggles to recognize the truth that he might have simply helped his dad believed in the superhero grandeur. Even with all the formalities and camera skills, these are all just icing on the cake. What one would love most about the film is the story. However, this is also the aspect where it gets hit the hardest.

Critics such as IGN or Metacritics would rate the movie a 6 or even a 5 out of 10 because it does not deliver the satisfaction of a good, wrap-up ending that fans of the previous films were dying for. In the movie, it feels as if the

story of *Split* was forced in a mash-up with *Unbreakable*. It is clear why most fans would have this feeling, especially when near the end when it was revealed that Glass, who discovered David Dunn with the rigging of the train also accidentally “created” Kevin as one member of the dead from the train wreck was Kevin’s dad. The loss of a father caused her mother to be aggressive towards Kevin, therefore allowing his disorder to develop to protect himself and the eventual development of The Beast. The climax of the movie was also ruined by the unsatisfactory deaths of the three. David, whose weakness is water, is forced to drown in a puddle by Ellie’s “police”; The Horde, who could deflect bullets in his Beast form, dies from two sniper shots after the true Kevin Wendall Crumb is reawakened amongst his personalities; Mr. Glass, was literally crushed to death by The Beast. This anti-climax was most likely the root of all dissent from diehard Shyamalan fans.

One should look more carefully to understand the true meaning behind the unsatisfactory death of the characters. Like what Glass often says, “this isn’t a comic,” I believe the movie is a realistic representation of the world and our expectations. Unlike the superheroes in Disney’s Marvel or DC Comics, these superheroes are constantly bombarded with the idea that they do not have any superpowers, and that they have imagined everything. Mr. Glass is the only person, even though what he did was horrifying, who keeps on believing that both The Beast and David are real. He desperately tries to persuade them to fight and show the world the superhuman exists. One should believe, even if the entire world does not, because that spark of hope always originates from that one person.

This may also be a representation of Shyamalan’s career in movies. Ever since his blockbuster *The Sixth Sense*, critics and moviegoers have been anticipating more. When *Unbreakable* arrived, critics were skeptical, often comparing it to *The Sixth*

Sense as it did not have an explosive ending. A consensus reveal on Rotten Tomato showed it does not have a good ending, unlike *The Sixth Sense*. Prominent critics even went on to criticize the reviews based on the plots of *The Sixth Sense*. But it was only in later years that the film was praised by many and even be included in Quentin Tarantino's "Top 20 films since 1992". Just like *Unbreakable*, *Glass* might perhaps be a film that would be loved only in the later years, as many once again compared it to the previous two films, and for the "shallow" ending that the movie receives.

But as if Shyamalan knew the critical reaction for this film, he responds with the "happy" ending of *Glass*, where Glass thwarted Ellie Staples's plot to wipe them out of existence with the secret downloads of all the security tapes that displays both The Horde and David's incredible feats. There is a ray of hope as the camera pans out in the final scene in the busy Metro station, where everyone received the video clips on their phones. Perhaps, this movie would be more appealing if viewed from an artistic expression of the director's feelings towards Hollywood's treatment of his talents. Like *Glass*, Shyamalan is a talented director often shrugged under the rug because of the spotlight of other major blockbusters. Even when he has done something good, it is still cast in comparison with his prior work, with many expecting him to outdo them. Under so much pressure, M Night Shyamalan continues to write the most fantastic twists in his movies, capturing the heart of millions across the world. I believe that these superheroes portrayed in the film is a direct metaphor for himself. He believes his career will undoubtedly die in the most unspectacular manner, but his work will surely shine through.

Perhaps, this is why at the moment of his death, Mr. Glass says to his mother "I am not a mistake."

California Culture in the 1970s and the 1990s in music

By Anna Franziska Röttgers

In the twenty-first century Hollywood and Californian culture are omnipresent. Each year there are hundreds of Hollywood productions, film as well as TV, shown around the globe. The ideologies and images of California that these productions carry reach millions in many different countries. Music has a long tradition in criticising and depicting contemporary culture and events. Consequently, there are many songs that centre on California, to name just a few: 'California Girls' by the Beach Boys, 'California Dreaming' by Mamas and the Papas, 'San Francisco (Be Sure to Wear Flowers in Your Hair)' by Scott McKenzie and 'California' by Phantom Planet. This paper will closely examine the 1976 hit Hotel California by the Eagles and the 1999 song Californication by the Red Hot Chili Peppers. The text will give a brief background on the bands and then will extensively analyse the lyrics in relation to their year of publication and the accompanying cultural developments.

The Eagles were formed in the year 1971 in Los Angeles, California. They are one of the best-selling bands of all time, having sold tens of millions of albums. Their song 'Hotel California' from the album of the same name (1976) is their signature song. In 1977 it was released as a single ranking high on the Billboard charts. Its lyrics are famous because of their ambiguity and many fans as well as critics have taken their turn to interpret them. When questioned, the Eagles usually refused to give their meaning of the song. What follows is my own interpretation by means of a close analysis.

The song follows an Intro - verse 1 – chorus – verse 2 – chorus – verse 3 - outro structure. The verses are sung/told by a persona who is reporting on his journey. The first verse begins with "On a dark desert highway/Cool wind in my hair/Warm smell of colitas/Rising up through the air". The highway is likely the route 66 (now replaced by several

interstates) through the Mojave Desert. Colita is a Spanish word, literally meaning a little tail and it refers to the tips of the marijuana plant, the blossoms of which are consumed as a drug. The question arises why a Spanish word is used here, this could be due to California's geographical proximity to Mexico and that the state was Mexican territory until the 1840s. Many Mexican immigrants live in California and Spanish is the second most-spoken language. From the perspective of lyric writing, it may also be due to the three vowel sounds that the word contains, and the stress on its middle syllable (amphibrach) that makes it a perfect fit for the contour of the melody at this point of the song.

The 1970s saw the rise of drug consumption and music and drug consume reciprocally influenced each other, as we can see here. The song continues with "Up ahead in the distance/I saw a shimmering light" which refers to the city of Los Angeles that is lighted with artificial, electric light that can be seen kilometres away over the plains of South California. On his metaphorical journey through South California, the persona of the narrative lyric becomes tired and stops at the Hotel California. When the song comes to "There she stood in the doorway/I heard the mission bell /And I was thinking to myself/"This could be Heaven or this could be Hell", it becomes more enigmatic. The persona is welcomed by a woman, who will later turn out to be the personification of hedonism and greed in California as will be explained in more detail in the course of the analysis. In my opinion the mission bell, which in the normal sense calls the believers to service, here means the message of California, that you can get famous and lead the life of a superstar. The thought "This could be heaven or this could be hell" could mean that this life may look like heaven but there is this negative subtext to it that implies at a closer look it is actually hell.

The chorus first introduces the term Hotel California which arguably represents the hedonism and greed in California,

most notably in Los Angeles. Everything there is just facades (“Such a lovely place (Such a lovely place)/Such a lovely face”), its actual business is dark. In verse two the lyrics turn back to the woman, “Her mind is Tiffany twisted/She got the Mercedes bends/She got a lot of pretty, pretty boys/She calls friends”, who is crazy, note the clever wordplay on Mercedes bends. It refers to the bends, an informal expression for the decompression sickness, which is experienced in form of mental dislocation by scuba divers who surface too fast. It suggests the distorted sense of absolute materialism. The verse continues by describing people that dance, which represents the party culture of superstars and high society circles. The verse ends interestingly, interesting because of the use of word play. Wine is not a spirit, spirit also has another meaning, namely mood or attitude of a person. In line with this wine possibly does not mean the alcoholic beverage but its homophone whine. Thus, nobody ever complained or whined about life or anything since 1969. The slightly changed chorus tells about the fake lives that they all lead (“alibis”).

The last verse revolves around the extravagancy of the lives of (music) stars, they have “Mirrors on the ceiling”, “pink champagne on ice”, and have large rooms, referred to as “master’s chambers” in the song. It also characterises all these things, which are all part of the California industry, as a prison and once you will enter this world you can never escape it.

The song might be an echo from the 1960s anti-art and avant-garde movement that argued that mass media are the means of a capitalist society to demonstrate a fake reality. As the culture of California heavily relies on mass media, also back in 1970s, the song underpins this message and claims that California is a fake reality in itself.

The Red Hot Chili Peppers formed in Los Angeles in 1983 and are also one of the best-selling bands in popular music

with over 80 million records sold. 'Californication' appeared on the album with the same name and became their biggest commercial hit with 16 million copies.

The song itself is full of imagery, metaphor and intertextual references deconstructing California culture, beginning with its title. Californication is a portmanteau of California and fornication, the latter meaning sex. This already foreshadows what California culture really is in the view of the Red Hot Chili Peppers. The song is structured into Verse 1 – verse 2 – pre-chorus 1 – chorus – verse 3 – verse 4 – pre-chorus 2 – chorus – verse 5 – pre-chorus 3 – chorus.

Verse 1 talks about irrational paranoidias that someone other than oneself is controlling one's life ("Psychic spies from China /Try to steal your mind's elation"). The rest of the verse deals with the perception of California from the outside. Many people dream of being a part of it, being famous and seeing their name on the closing credits but they do not know the harsh reality ("Little girls from Sweden/Dream of silver screen quotations"). This is what Californication is. In Verse 2 the ideas of civilization and sun setting ("And all of Western civilization/The sun may rise in the east/At least it's settled in a final location") are connected and arguably it means that the decline of civilization is ahead of us. The last two lines are to the point, Hollywood sells the image of the brilliant place where everyone wants to be, successfully concealing the dark sides. The first Pre-Chorus is the first one of the actual people in the business. In order to remain successful in the business, they have to fight against natural aging, they need to look forever young ("To break the spell of aging"). The Pre-Chorus also features internal rhyme ("First born unicorn"). The unicorn is a symbol of virginity, though as soon as you come into contact, you will lose it quite quickly. On the other hand, there is also this contradiction of a unicorn (virginity) and the sex ("Hard core soft porn") that Hollywood sells (but is reluctant to show). Skipping the less interesting chorus, let's

continue with Verse 3. This verse is more difficult to interpret. It addresses another archetype here, a symbolic person who is drawn into the whole society, but not a real person (“Marry me girl”). Considering how constellations (“Be my very own constellation”) also determine one’s destiny, this symbolic person is his fate. In the 1990s teenage pregnancies were at quite a high rate, they wake up from their Hollywood dreams and realize that there is real information (“Getting high on information”) out there, possibly these girls are similar to the Swedish girls (who are not necessarily Swedish, it just represents how Californication spreads around the globe), mentioned in Verse 1. The first example of intertextuality can also be found in this verse, “Good vibrations” refers to a song of the Beach Boys (a complex song that is worthy of an analysis as well). Finally, almost everyone wants a star on the Hollywood boulevard but buying is not how it works or in a more critical train of thought, this may be exactly the way it works. Verse 4 is very interesting in terms of intertextuality. It refers to Star Trek (“Space may be the final frontier”), Nirvana (“Cobain”), a David Bowie album (“Station to Station”) and Star Wars (“Alderaan”). All these references add additional layers to the song. Pre-chorus 2 again uses internal rhyme (“praise – raise”) and briefly state that everyone is under the influence of Californication (“Well, everybody’s been there/And I don’t mean on vacation”), or more precisely, the ideology it sells. Verse 5 introduces the idea of destruction. Destruction can be an opportunity for something new (“It also breeds creation”). The earthquakes might refer to the actual earthquakes that California often experiences due to its geographical location, but in the metaphorical sense they might be used to make something good out of the situation. If California is wiped out (“And tidal waves couldn’t save the world from Californication”) it does not help because the ideas are still there because they went around the world.

Both ‘Hotel California’ and ‘Californication’ criticize the culture and ideologies of California. Neither criticise it very

By Lingnan University Students

openly but through the means of stylistic devices that may not be easy and straightforwardly to interpret. Especially 'Hotel California' is open to many interpretations, some of which identify the Hotel California as satanic church. Even though my interpretation differs from the satanic church, this does not mean that mine is the 'right' interpretation, both interpretations are equally 'right' because there is no such thing as a 'right' interpretation. This not only holds true for the interpretation of the lyrics of 'Hotel California' but any text, be it a poem, a narrative or music lyrics. 'Californication' on the other hand is interesting in terms of the various references to other cultural texts and it is relatively more direct than Hotel California. Interestingly, the two songs were published 23 years apart but their subtext has the same topic. It seems that the issue has not changed to much to the better 23 years later and that there is still much to criticize. Interestingly, both bands were founded in Los Angeles, the centre of the California and Hollywood music business. Therefore, it is fair to say that they have some authority to write songs that express thoughts about California that probably stem from their own experiences. Another interesting fact is that both albums were named after the songs. This choice indicates that the songs were important to the artists, which underlines that music also can have a societal purpose.

Please visit the web for lyrics to Hotel California and Californication.

The Sublimity of Desire

Carter McGrath

Affection is a drug many cannot fight. When one loses a source of affection, they will search for a new one. When one loses a chemical affection, they will search for one that is breathing. Perhaps it is part of the healing process to allow for new affections to come into one's life, to allow oneself to become addicted again. Her platinum blonde hair wrapped itself around every eager will in my being, her icy blue eyes could pierce through any desire to leave. Yet she was nothing more to me, and I think she knew this. I knew somewhere as well, that I was nothing more than a different type of needle: a full-blooded replacement to what once filled her veins. I knew this, and respected this, yet still tried to compete with chemical bliss in a fight I was sure to lose. Yet still, I held onto her as if I could heal her. I was too young to know that holding on to people because you want to help them can cause some of the strongest moments of grief.

We were both in a travel writing class, along with some of my best friends. Together we were going to go through the Swiss Romande to write a grand Swiss travel piece. I could feel that her sobriety was waning, that the needle's tip was calling for her. Yet I felt this trip would be healing to her. I felt like Ella Maillart, driving in an old car to Afghanistan with her equally needle craving friend and writer, Annemarie Schwarzenbach. The two spent months traveling, in what would become one of Maillart's most revered work, *La Voie Cruelle* (The Cruel Way). Unlike Maillart, I would not let my travel companion slip back. I would guide my muse through the grasps of chemical bliss, from sinking back into everlasting euphoria.

The first week would be one of the best of my life. Sitting on grassy mountain tops in the Vallais, looking down into the

valley and scribbling into my notebook. It felt like this was what I wanted to do for the rest of my life, just freeze the perfection of crisp Swiss air running through my hair as I wrote line after line of notes. We would return at night, cold and shivering from the mountain air to be warmed by the loving embrace of bubbling cheese fondue. Fondue is only to be enjoyed with the crispest of white wines, to counteract the fatty decadence of bread covered cheese. We were all happy at this point, and it felt like life could not get any sweeter. Every day was filled with sublime Swiss peaks, creative writing workshops, pure happiness. But eventually, we had to leave the solace of the mountains for the creative energies and bustle of the cities. We stopped in Lausanne, wandering through its hip medieval streets. She and I would spend the nights together, in bed or on the rooftop drinking wine and looking onto Lake Geneva. We were both creating beautiful things, both in our own worlds on the page and with each other. Geneva would change all of that.

Chocolate, watches, and mountains define the stereotypical Switzerland. Geneva, is a textbook Swiss City. Right on Lake Geneva, the entire skyline is bordered by the Alps' foothills. Geneva's streets are lined with expensive chocolate boutiques and watch companies, small and large, selling their wares and absurd prices. In many ways, Geneva is an extremely exorbitant city, until one cracks through the layer of lust and glamor to find the real Geneva.

“How long are we going to be in Geneva?” she asked from under her warm hat. Fall had been brisk that year. We were walking through the city, through the Calvinist Reformation Wall built to commemorate the spread of Protestantism.

“I dunno, I think three days or something? Aren't you excited?”

“No...I hate Geneva.”

“Alrighty then,” I said, turning away to escape her negativity.

“I have friends in Geneva. Not the good kind of friends.”

With that, I realized her hesitance in coming to the glittering city. “It’ll be okay, just stay with us and everything will be fine. Okay?” She shrugged and turned back to the city. We had several hours to ourselves, so two close friends and I decided to wander the old quarter. “What’ll you do? You can come with us, if you want.” I asked her before setting off.

“Maybe,” She shrugged, but I figured it would be okay. We walked through the cobblestones of the old city, stopping periodically to take photos or people watch from cafes. Geneva is a beautiful city, from its cathedrals and old cobblestones to the giant waterspout constantly shooting out of Lake Geneva. We went back to the hotel, and I knocked on her door to see if she was there to join us for some drinks. No answer. So we went out to walk and grab some drinks. Geneva is especially gorgeous at night, glittering on the lake with little fairy lights in every direction. We passed watch stores, showing their wares through bright lit windows.

We walk up the stairs to our hotel, and I knock on her door just to say goodnight. At nearly two in the morning, she should be home. After a few moments of silence, I knock again with no answer. I open the door slowly, peering in around the corner expecting to find something more than the total darkness of an unlit room. Behind the door, a pale white face with dark white eyes greeted me, blonde hair pinned under a cap. She could not recognize me, gazing through the walls behind me with eyes that seemed like they would never shut. “What’s wrong?” I said through a calm voice, knowing exactly what had happened.

She sat down on the bed, “I went for a walk.”

“That’s nice. What did you see?”

“I walked around. I saw the sights.” I did not answer. “Did you know you can buy heroine for nine Francs?”

“I fucking knew it. I fucking knew it.” I paced around the small room, the walls covered in squiggly colored lines clearly not redesigned since the 1990’s. How should one properly respond to the person the care about relapsing?

“I didn’t buy any, don’t freak out.”

“Don’t lie to me.”

“Look!” She yelled, showing me her bare, track free arms. “Fucking relax.”

I calmed down, but I was not happy. I still knew something was wrong. At the same time, I knew I was caring too much about something I should not be involved in. I said goodnight and started to leave. As I was leaving, she grabbed my arm “Wait! Can’t you stay here tonight? Just for a while?” I said I’d just go brush my teeth and come back.

When I returned, I did not bother to knock. I walked through the door, into the dark, seeing only her left foot dangling off the bed onto the floor illuminated by the distant hallway light. I walked towards her, seeing her strung out across the bed. I flicked on the bright lights and shook her, “Hey, wake up. Wake up! Hey!” Eventually, her icy blue eyes opened and looked blankly at me. “What did you take? What did you do?”

“I just had a bit.”

“But you don’t have tracks!”

She shrugged, “there are other ways.”

I had nothing more to say. What have I been trying to accomplish, trying to protect her from herself? I knew that at some point it would all change, that she would go straight back to what she had always done. I walked over towards the window of the small room, pushing the curtain aside to look out. There was no view. I looked back, and when I turned around she had passed out again on the bed. “Wake up!” I shouted, running back to her. “You can’t sleep yet.”

“It’s already hit my bloodstream.”

“How will we stay awake?” I said, not knowing what to do. I had been around heroine before, but never dealt with someone going through too much at once. She had not used in over ten months, and her body could not take the amount she was usually used to. She could barely keep her head up. “I’m calling the ambulance.” I said, reaching into my pocket to pull my phone out.

“Don’t!” She screamed, tugging at my arm. “I’ll be okay, I know what to do.”

“You don’t know shit! You haven’t used in months!”

“I’ll be fine.”

“What do you want me to do?” I screamed in a low voice, “Watch you have an overdose?”

“You can try. Just don’t call the ambulance, I don’t need that right now.”

I knew she was too conscious to overdose, but I knew she had taken more than she could handle. My mind tensed and my head ached, thinking about having to explain to two

parents that their daughter had died because I would not act. “I don’t fucking care. I’m calling.”

“Don’t!” She screamed again. “It’s already hit the blood stream, it won’t get much worse.” I didn’t believe her, but what else could I do? Call an ambulance for someone that was fine, explain to the school that she was using and subsequently get her kicked out for taking on a school trip? Both options had equally terrible outcomes, or so it seemed at the time.

“We’ll wait a bit. If you get worse, I’m calling.”

“Fine.” she squeaked, leaning back on the bed fluttering under heavy eye lids. I sat down next to her, wondering what someone under the influence of an opioid would want to be doing. I guess all they could do was sit back, deep within their own mind, feeling as if they were back in their mother’s womb having the equivalent of one million orgasms at once. It sounded amazing. I flicked on the television, trying to distract her and myself from the drug between us. We sat silently watching the television in the dark, flipping through French and German shows. Suddenly I switched the channel from a French talkshow to a vibrant rouge close up of a phallus entering a woman, and she whimpered softly in some German expletives. We watched for a while, pondering their dramatized bliss, not necessarily aroused but merely reveling at the ridiculousness of the lives we were leading. A drug addicted poet snuggled next to a heavy-drinking low-life watching slow German pornography on a small, out of date Japanese television in Geneva. Occasionally, life puts you in moments that make you think ‘What the fuck am I doing.’

The next morning, we had another tour of Geneva, starting with the Red Cross Museum on the outskirts of downtown. The museum details the history of the Red Cross, from its

beginnings as a nursing system to its continuous aid across the world today. Afterwards, we went to the World Health Organization for a presentation and brainstorm with one of the administrators at the Organization. We talked of issues afflicting global health, and a bit about the policy inherent in making change across so many different countries. I felt that drug addiction could be an important topic to bring up, but felt it may be out of place. We got back after a long, academic, and emotionally heavy day. The only thing on our minds was to blow off some steam. We went for a wander, she, I and some of our closest friends downtown to some bars we had heard would be busy tonight. We walked along the Rhône, to some riverside bars for a quick drink. She was skittish, always looking around and constantly peering at her phone to send messages. "What's up?" I would say.

"Just talking to some friends." She muttered, not looking at me, only at her phone. We would walk together along the river, and she would walk off giving the excuse that she wanted to see what was around the other corner. I would trail behind, and she would push me back. She would come back to the group, only for a few moments before going off into some side alleyway. I knew she was getting something, and for some reason I could not let go and let her do it. She had no free will because of me, and I felt that I had to keep close over her. Finally, we all wandered into a bar, after pulling her out of countless alleys. The bar had a rooftop, sitting directly on the Rhône river with a view into the fairy lights of shops and bars surrounding the lake and river. It was the perfect place to have a few beers, so we did. For a moment, everything was perfect. We were all drinking together in a group of about eight, laughing and enjoying a brisk night in Geneva. After a few beers, we were ready to leave. I looked away, and when I looked back she had completely vanished.

“Where is she?” I quivered. My friend shrugged, pointing her thumb towards the bathroom. So we waited, at least for twenty minutes until my friend went up to search for her. There was no sign of her to be found. I stood up immediately, trying to get people up and out of their seats so we could go find her.

“Calm down man, she probably just went back to the hotel. It’s like, one o’clock.” One of the friendly voices said.

“No she didn’t, I know she didn’t.” I swore under my breath, biting my thumb and looking out towards the streets. “Hey guys sorry can we just go check outside?” We got up out of the bar, some of my friends not sure of what was happening. “Maybe she went to the festival?” One of my friends nodded, and we headed towards the festival. It was only a few blocks away, and the music was loud enough to lead us to its epicenter.

Around the corner the music blasted, emanating deep thumping vibrations through the ground. The whole world seemed to shake beneath me. We kept walking, searching to see if we could see her anywhere in the crowd. This did not feel like the place to be, but we split up venturing through the drunks, junkies, and ravers to scan every corner of the little square park. Pushing through people, I exited the mass of bodies onto a quiet street, where I looked up to see the worried look of my friend. He shrugged, without saying a word, tugging at his backpack straps with both his hands. Our other friends, the ones who had stuck around, had congregated near me to see what was wrong. They gathered with quizzical minds, curious about the sweat on my brow and the worried look on my face. Rather than answer, I leaned over, stabilizing my arms on my knees and scanning the cobble stoned street. I looked for an answer in those cracks, yet found none. Their voices detonated in my mind,

nothing more than an explosive collection of noise without meaning. I crouched on the street, holding my head tight to quiet their droning voices. I could not believe that my muse, my addiction had been lost. Would I ever find her, to be the injection of her bliss once more? Or would she be lost to the thumping Earth, lost to the passion that continued to separate us. Hazy purple light surrounded me as I rocked back and forth, muttering lightly under my breath, “She’s gone...She’s gone...She’s gone...” And only then, could I hear the silence of my loneliness.

Pizza Drag Queens

Carter McGrath

It started innocently enough. I was having a pizza and wine night with my Brazilian friend, Gi, and Sara from Seattle. The next thing I knew, I was in a greasy skirt, busted makeup, and garlic breath knocking on random doors with a Tim Curry worthy “Pizza delivery, big boy.”

It was Saturday, so earlier that morning we had hopped on the tram to the Italian border for cheap 4-liter bottles of dark burgundy wine. Mix viscous fermented grapes with pizza and a drunk Brazilian and two Americans and you’ve got a good night ahead. We worked through our individual pieces and several glasses of bottomless chianti, listening to 70’s R&B and talking about everything from the French Enlightenment to reveling on the utter hotness of Brazilians.

We cracked open the emergency box of pizza in our tipsy malaise, splitting it evenly. Getting down to the final piece of shared pizza is when you discover who your real friends are. I motioned to Gi, “Take,” I blurted, reaching out my greasy, cheese soaked fingers. Grabbing the cold slice, I shoved it towards her, which should have spewed a wave of syrupy yellow grease in her direction. Instead, the slice held up drip free until Gi went for a sumptuous bite of the drunken pizza. Grease balls alighted with a certain delicacy in cinematic slow-motion upon Gi’s grey skirt, dancing down from the heavens above and yielding a thunderous “Foda! Ah filho de puta!” from the Brazilian. She may look like a model, but she can swear like a sailor.

She ripped off her skirt in a haze of anger, so to cheer her up I merely offer “Can I throw it on?” Gi’s face alighted, as a devilish smile cracked her face open.

“Yes, and I have the perfect top for you too!”

It was makeover time. I was instantly catapulted onto the bed, squeezed through a tight skirt and a large bra while Sara pinned my hair back so makeup could be painted across my greasy lips and wine glazed eyes. Several minutes later: I was flawless. Drunken flawless. I've done drag before. Oh, honey, I've done some great drag before. Being a woman is nothing new to me, but to others, it can be quite a rapturous experience. As I paraded my tight butt and perky breasts down the hall, strutting my best Dr. Frankenfurter, I was not thinking about possible outcomes of my outgoing behavior. To some, I was hilarious, a gorgeous tall lady worth wrapping an arm around. For others I was a tad offensive. Some were mad at me, saying I shouldn't be parading myself as a woman down the halls of my freshman dorm. This behavior was natural to me though; this was just another act. To me drag was no different from acting the part of Romeo or Oliver Twist; it was all just for fun and for the creative venture of being in someone else's skin for a brief moment in time.

A lot of my friends in the drag community are involved in it because it allows them to feel comfortable in their bodies, to feel whole for once. There is so much rigidity in the masculine image that some are only allowed to breathe out when they are trying to squeeze into a corset, blinking large fake eyelashes in pained excitement of completing their transformation. This act is an escape for them and a way to feel whole, which is not something I can truthfully say I have experienced. I have always been comfortable in my particular 'male' pronouns, but of course I love being able to wear a dress and do this societally 'female' activities. More than the fun of dressing up, I wanted to make my friends laugh, and get a couple eyes staring at my form fitted ass in a pizza soaked skirt. For me, the laugh and the chance to be a woman outweighed any negative response I would receive. Everyone should feel beautiful, even when drunk and covered in pizza drippings.

Going Home

Thibault DeJace

As I'm lying in my bed, I realise my days here in Hong-Kong are soon to be over. I can count them on the fingers of my hands. Fewer than 10 days. In 240 hours, I'll be gone. I already started to pack some stuff and my room starts to be tidy again. That little room. I remember entering it for the first time, discovering that small space I'd be calling home for the next 6 months. I remember sitting on my mattress for the first time and realising that we two will not become friends.

And there I am, laying in this uncomfortable bed, well we made peace a long time ago. I grew used to it, but I feel some tears coming. I don't stop them. As Mom always said, let it go. So, I let them go. Even if I'm not ashamed of crying, I do enjoy a good cry on a sad movie, I'm glad my roommate is not in the room with me.

I don't even know why I'm crying. Why are those soft pearls running down my cheeks. I'm not sad of leaving, I'm about to begin this huge trip Léa and I have talked about for months now. We have planned every detail, every day and every activity are booked. It's going to be epic.

And those past four months have been incredible. I met extraordinary people, I saw wonderful things, I've never been so welcomed in my body or so at peace with my mind. I really lived 4 months of pure happiness. Outside of the real world, I have lived in that wonderful bubble. But that bubble is about to explode. It's okay, I knew it. It was part of the deal. Part of the experience. I'm so afraid of what will happen after, when I'm back.

How do you get back from such an experience? How do you deal with the rumbles once the bubble has exploded? I can't say that I'm not looking forward going home. I do miss my home, my mother's perfume, the way my father hugs me. I do miss my friends back there, those who stayed in Belgium but also those who left like me, living in their own bubble. I know that my first days back home are going to be great. My mom has already planned the whole weekend, my Grandma is waiting for me in her apartment by the coast, my friends have planned huge welcome-back parties. My calendar is almost full for the next ten days after my coming-back. But what will happen after those ten days of joy? Everyone will get back to their routine, as nothing happened. As I've never been away. But where's my routine? How do I keep on going when a part of my heart is missing?

I didn't expect to like Hong-Kong that much. It was supposed to be good, even great. I was supposed to have fun a couple of months and then go back home. That was the deal I signed up. But as it turns out, that's not what I'm ending up with. I truly loved Hong-Kong. I know I would not be able to live here. I'm not a big city guy. But I loved its skyline, its atmosphere, its vibrance and its landscapes. It wasn't planned but I fell for Hong-Kong.

But it's not only Hong-Kong, it's also the memories I made here and the people inside of those memories. The more important of them is Léa. I know that we will still see each other when we'll be back in Belgium. But after six months with her, I ended up loving her. Well, not in a romantic way, Léa is like my sister. But even that bound seems to plain to truly describe how I feel for her. I feel like she had always known me. She knows everything about me. When I'm with her, there is no mask, no lies, no taboo. I'm my true self. I've never felt uncomfortable or ashamed in her presence. She is

(almost) the first person I text to. In those past months, we've been Siamese. Wherever I was going, she went and wherever she was going, I went. And I'm a bit scared of not having her by my side when we will get back.

But it's not all about her. There is also Nick, Julia, Arnaud, Renz, Jonathan, Astrid, Paul. And all of the other. I didn't plan to get attached to them. But I did. Even if I knew, for the most of them, that the relationship we started had an expiration date. And the date has come. It's time to say goodbyes. And we all say 'Don't worry, I'll come in Belgium', 'I can't wait to visit you in Paris', 'Hey! If you pass by Brussels, you know where to stay! I have a free bed'. And I hope that we will still see each other, but I know that life happens. That we are all going to get back to it and getting caught up with it. I do hope from the bottom of my heart that we will still see other after, I intend to do my best to keep those relation alive. But it's all so scary, so uncertain. It hurts a bit.

I didn't realise that was also part of the deal. It was written in the bottom, in small letter. You know, the one you don't care about. I didn't realise that it was not hard to go on exchange, everybody can do so. The hardest part is getting back from it. I left pieces of my heart here in Hong-Kong. And I'll have to deal with that. I have to find a new balance, a way to get with it. It's going to take time but I don't have a choice. In the end, it's going to be okay. I'm going to be okay.

If there is one thing I've learned from this exchange it is that I'm way stronger than I thought. I'm not that little child who got bullied anymore. I still have my weakness, I still have hard spots and struggles but I'm not afraid anymore.

And here I am. Lying in my bed, still crying but a smile has grown on my face. I get up and I look around. I look at my

bags, almost done. I look at my journal, sitting on my desk. I start to flip through all those pages full of memories. There is our first ticket plane, a selfie of Léa and I, in our kayak, lost in the Chinese Sea. There are movies tickets, tickets from the Forbidden City or even from the Great Wall. And the tears slowly stop, as the smile grows stronger. I read my first impressions on Hong-Kong, or even the first days in the Philippines.

One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten. I still have ten days here. And Hong-Kong, brace yourself because I haven't say my last word. I'm not ready to put a "the end" on my story yet. Maybe I won't. I don't know.

But I know one thing for sure. If I had to do it all over again, if I had the choice to go back in time and to decide if I want to come here, I'll not change a single thing.

So, thank you Hong-Kong. Thank you for those months. For letting me discover an amazing city. Thank you Léa for supporting me all days long and still be there when I need you. Thank you, Arnaud, Astrid, Paul, Renz, Jonathan, Carter and all the other. You made my stay here a wonder. And it would not have been the same without you guys.

I have stopped flipping through my journal. There are plenty of blank pages left. Maybe it's time to fill them with new adventures? Maybe that's what life is about. Keeping the old chapter in mind while we are witting the next one? And keep on moving forward. That doesn't forbid you to look backward and cherish the memories you made, but there are still plenty of them to be created.

The Crystal Bracelet

Abby Ng

Overwhelmed and disoriented, I let the crowd carry me. I shuffled shoulder to shoulder between a Chinese woman wearing too much perfume and a balding German man dripping sweat. With barely enough room to breathe, let alone move, I only dared to wiggle out when a rainbow pile of crystal bracelets caught my eye. I squirmed my way toward one of the many compact stalls lined with touristy treasures and started mentally preparing myself to bargain.

The blaring white lights of the Temple Street Night Market in Hong Kong slightly reflected off of the hundreds of green, purple and red beads. I hesitantly reached down to run my hands over them, remembering what my roommate Katie told me.

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Katie stretched out her arm in front of me, showing off her new crystal bracelet with pride.

“Do you like it?” she asked.

It was beautiful. Tiny transparent beads tinged pink delicately balanced on her wrist. They made her look youthful yet sophisticated.

“Oh yes,” I responded without hesitation. “Is it real?”

“Feel it,” she prompted and smiled.

Gently tracing my fingers over the soft curves of the beads, I was immediately shocked by how cold they were.

“It’s so cold, right? And if you look closely at each bead, they’re all different and a bit cloudy. That’s how you know it’s real,” she assured me. “It’s not too perfect.”

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Hoping to feel the icy smoothness of real crystal, I was disappointed but not surprised when they were almost as warm as the sweaty German man I was standing next to. The market is known for its forgeries, not for its authenticity. I sighed and walked away. I was still on a mission.

In the memory of my grandmother, “por por” in Cantonese, I promised myself that I would find a genuine jade or crystal Chinese bracelet.

Por Por did not bring much with her when she left her family behind in Kowloon to chase the American Dream. Still, included in her small chest of belongings was a bright green and glistening jade bangle that she eventually gave to my mother. I remember staring and admiring my mother wearing it on special occasions. With the bracelet accentuating her tiny wrist, she had the elegance of a Chinese empress and the glamour of an old Hollywood actress.

Not only is the bracelet gorgeous, but I like the idea of passing down a small piece of family history. One day my mother will give me the same bracelet, but for now I want my own that commemorates the time I spent studying abroad in the place Por Por first called home.

Unlike me, perhaps most people on Temple Street are not looking for the real deal. They’re looking for fake Gucci that smells like nail polish or wannabe Ray Bans that don’t quite fit. They all bear the crowds in pursuit of pretending.

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While riding the MTR or standing in jam packed elevators, it is easy to notice the imposter Gucci logo that looks more like a “C” than a “G” and the warped Supreme label masquerading a \$20 t-shirt as a \$300 one. With the appearance of fake goods and fast fashion almost everywhere I go in Hong Kong, I have been thinking a lot about authenticity. What does authenticity really mean and why do we value it?

In my Philosophy of Visual Arts class, we often discuss artistic crimes such as forgery. Some people believe that forgery, imitating another artists’ style or work and passing it off as real, does not actually make a difference in sensory experience. If it is beautiful and people enjoy it, why should it be discounted? They argue that only self-important art buffs and moral elitists look down on forgery.

But there is an argument deeper than ego, and perhaps that is why I want a real crystal bracelet. Authenticity is about history. It is about a story of how something came to be, in what conditions it was created, in what challenges it overcame. Appreciating authenticity means valuing unique and honest stories that stay true to their origins. I think there is beauty in not pretending.

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It may be ironic and undeniably cliché, but I came to Hong Kong to find what is real and to find my authentic self. I thought that if I could be surrounded by people who looked like me, I might feel more confident in my own skin and sure of my own choices.

But instead, I found myself feeling like a plastic bracelet in a pile of crystal ones. I never fully allowed myself to be vulnerable, and so I never truly felt like myself. I put on a

smile when I wanted to cry, and I laughed when I wanted to scream. I became what I never wanted to be: a fake.

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Under flashing purple lights and a haze of artificial smoke, I squinted and scanned the club to see my new friends screaming over the bass and dancing like drunken bumper cars. They looked happy and free while I was uncomfortably sober.

“Abby!” I saw them yell more than heard it.

I pushed my way through a line of crop top wearing girls aggressively swaying to the music until I was surrounded by my friends.

“Isn’t this wild?” Maya shouted into my ear as she got pulled away to do shots with a random birthday girl holding a glowing vodka bottle.

Still too sober to appreciate all the drunken behavior around me, I just laughed and nodded. I wanted to go home.

From the outside, it probably looked like we belonged together. We were a group of bubbly yet edgy American Born Chinese exchange students out to party on a Thursday night. Coming from the Midwest in an area with a dismal Asian American population, it was my first time hanging out with other ABC’s. At first, it felt very natural to be with them. I assumed we’d have a lot in common coming from similar immigrant family backgrounds, but the more I tried fit in and look for similarities, the more I felt like an outsider.

Suddenly in the middle of an electronic dance music club, I was pretending to be something I was not.

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By Lingnan University Students

“I really wish you could be here, Mom,” I said, gasping for air with tears running down my cheeks.

Before she could respond, the door banged opened and I saw Katie. Instantly embarrassed, I hung up and threw my phone down on my bed. I tried to hide my tears, but it was too late.

Without a word, Kathy just gave me a hug, and I felt like I didn’t have to hide anymore. She embraced me in a real, raw moment, and I didn’t have to pretend to be perfect.

And that’s the thing about authenticity. Just like how each bead of a real crystal bracelet is different and imperfect, so are people. Everyone has stories and histories that make them real. If I don’t want to be fake, it’s time for me to take pride in my own experiences.

I’m still searching for an authentic crystal bracelet and figuring out how to always be my authentic self, but at least I know what I’m looking for.

Riffing on a Commonplace

Kristine Marie Reynaldo



1.

We were walking up a street toward the old Blue House in Wanchai, dodging commuters on the busy sidewalk on a Friday afternoon, when my friend V. suddenly asked, *Do you think it's possible to be in love with the same person for the rest of your life?* He thought that this romantic ideal was doomed to produce boredom. I said, *I think it depends on the quality of one's attention.* Walking briskly, he did not ask me to elaborate.

2.

Pico Iyer in *My Ideal Bookshelf*: *What more could one ask of a companion? To be forever new and yet forever steady. To be strange and familiar all at once, with enough change to quicken my mind, enough steadiness to give sanctuary to my heart.*

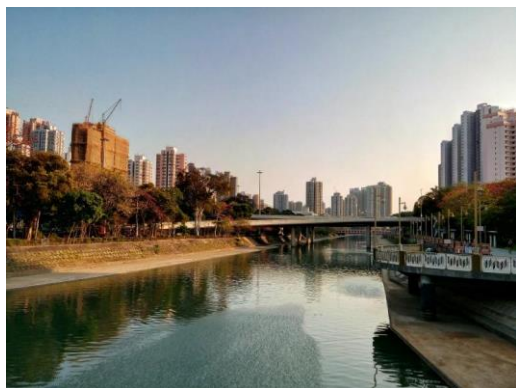
3.

Months ago, when I was new to this city, V. told me about his evening walks along the river, a walk that usually ended at the Light Rail station in the Town Centre, and recommended that I walk in that area sometime. Like most

By Lingnan University Students

rivers in Hong Kong, the Tuen Mun River courses through an artificial channel, its bed and banks covered with concrete, its natural tributaries turned into underground waterways or cut dry. This means that even when it rains for days, people around here don't worry about the river spilling into the streets, but also that when I gaze at the river, I do not think "river," I think "canal," and if I wanted a picnic on a bright day, I would rather spread a red-checkered cloth in a more idyllic elsewhere.

I said, *Do you find the river pretty?* He said, *It depends on my mood, my state of mind.*



4.

Another time, V. said that he didn't find the beach I frequented beautiful, that it was just like any other beach, that it was not even natural, that the white sand there was quarried and brought from somewhere else. *Maybe so*, I may or may not have replied (this was a long while ago), *but I like that beach because I've had memorable conversations there*, nursing a bottle of soju or beer, sitting on the shore and watching the sun sink down the horizon, or dipping in the water, bobbing with the waves.

5.

Lionel Shriver in *We Need to Talk About Kevin*, a novel on nihilism: *Nothing is interesting if you are not interested.*

6.

After an afternoon spent with J. in Golden Beach in the last month of last year, I wrote: *Love, like so many other things that make life worth the bother of being in the world, is a willful fiction, anchored on and realized in concrete, everyday practices. In an object-world devoid of inherent value, meaning-making is a matter of mythopoesis.*

If love occurs as a function of meaning-making, then it is imperative to remember that this labour is constant. Because circumstances change, because mere feeling is fleeting, because what is real and true and beautiful here, right now, may be gone in a minute.

As to why this labour must be done and redone – how do we decide what anything or anyone is worth?



7.

The people I find beautiful, I find beautiful not because they conform to any aesthetic standard, but because I've decided

that I like them. When I want to find someone beautiful, I look them in the eye, I attend to the timbre of their voice, I call them by their name, I learn what makes, what could make, them smile. The people I don't care about, I often fail to see, because I require a reason for looking.

8.

No one would accuse me of having fallen in love with handsome men, but every person I have wanted, I'd imagined was the objective correlative of my desire. I look long to see more of what I could find interesting, believing that, as with the books I keep, every reading would reveal something I hadn't considered – especially since a man, unlike a book, doesn't stay put. In a sense, it is possible to love many different persons in one, changing body in the course of a lifetime.



9.

Lately, I have been taking photographs more than I have been writing “creatively,” whatever that means. I feel, less than ever, the need to process my inner life, which, these days, is as serene as an aquarium, disturbed only by little fishies of anxiety relating to my thesis. No *Sturm und Drang* for me. I must be on the way to becoming a plant.

10.

John Berger in *Ways of Seeing*: *Seeing comes before words. The child looks and recognises before it can speak. But there is also another sense in which seeing comes before words. It is seeing which establishes our place in the surrounding world; we explain that world with words, but words can never undo the fact that we are surrounded by it.*

11.

Things I don't fail to see: the sky, flowering plants, trees, dogs in the street, bodies of water, the way concrete buildings change color depending on the time of the day. This is how I photosynthesize pleasure in the succession of days unremarkable for their similarity – by fishing an image out of the river of sense-perception.



12.

As I have taken to taking photographs daily, I am realizing how the apprehension of beauty is not about vision but selection and composition – deciding what is worth paying attention to, from which standpoint to gaze, what to put in the frame, what to leave out, what kind of light or color resonates a certain feeling – choices that rest on the structure of sentiments that shape the perception and understanding of the seeing I/eye. The aesthete approaches life and meaning-making cognizant of the power of selection and

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composition, of image, interpretation, narrative. The aesthete lives everyday life as curatorial practice – she chooses what to keep in her room, in her closet, in her pantry, in her contact list, in her thoughts. She knows why and what for.

13.

Solmaz Sharif: *Let me LOOK at you. Let me look at you in a light that takes years to get here.*

14.

Instead of wondering whether someone looks at me the way I look at the world, I look at the world, and yield these moments of my inwardness, even if they matter to no eye but my own.

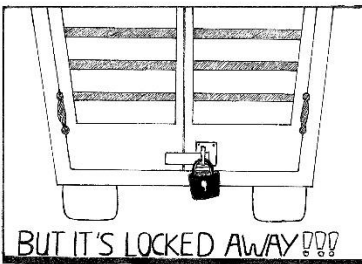
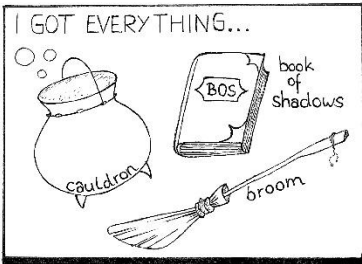
Comics

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The Leap

Sarah Gormley







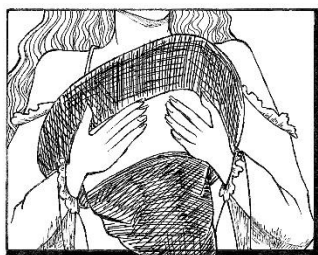
SOCIETY punishes WITCHCRAFT with DEATH yet it was never my decision. The sisterhood of the night is born THIS WAY.

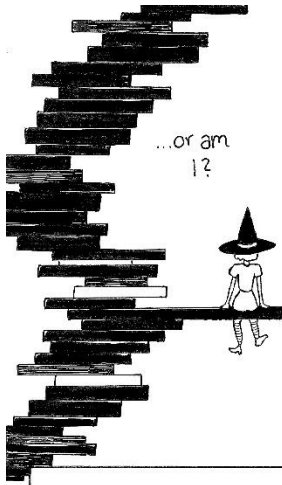
I was born this way, chosen by MAGIC.

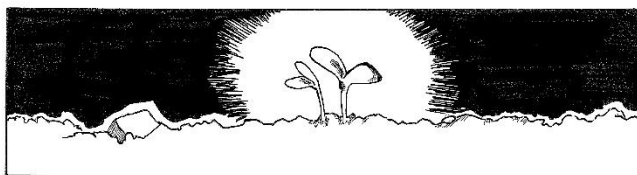
But as HATE grows, so does my FEAR!



And here I am: LONELY...



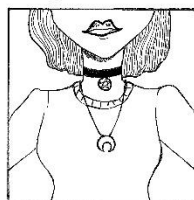
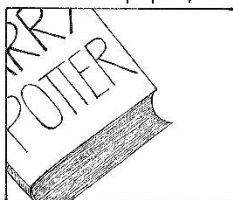
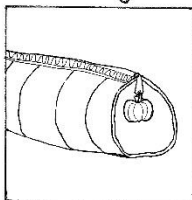




little signs

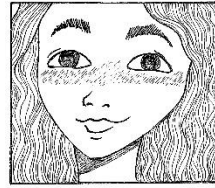
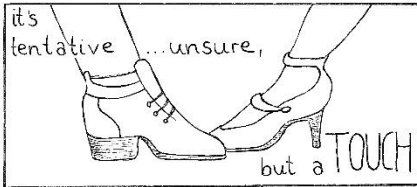
are hopefully

noticed

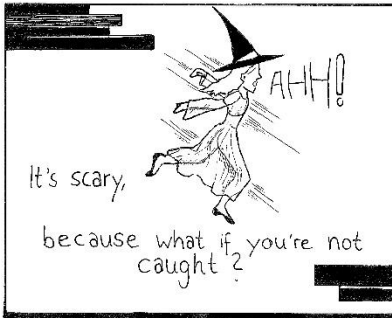
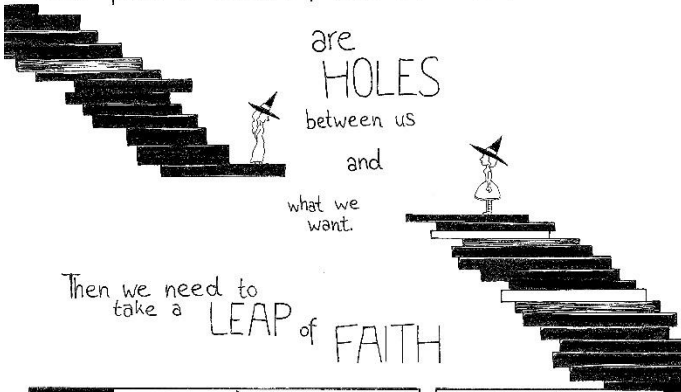


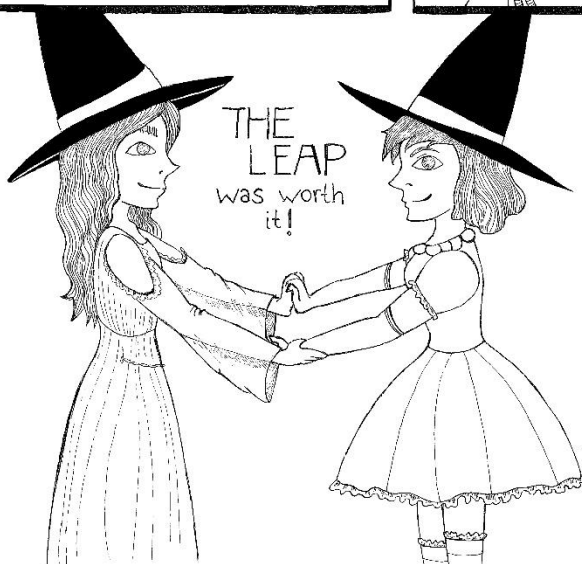
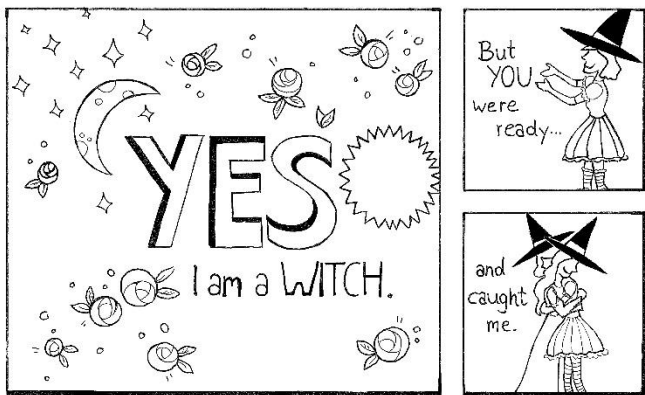
by the right ones, the ALLIES, by a WITCH! ☸





Our path is crooked, and sometimes there





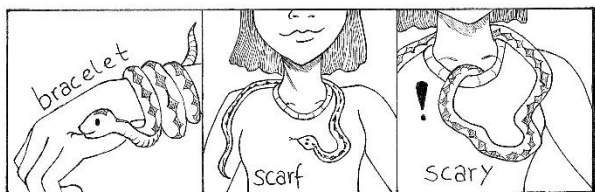


★ **THE END**
or is it a beginning?

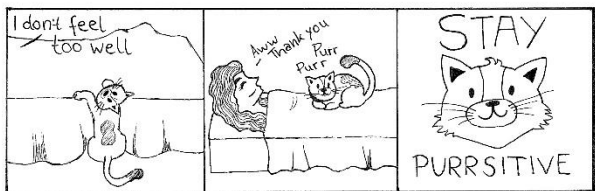
TALES of SKITTLE



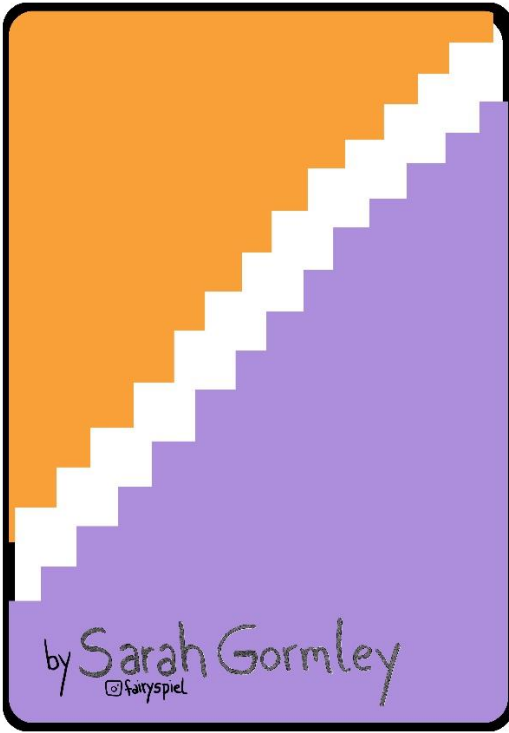
blind witches



Jewelry



Cheer up



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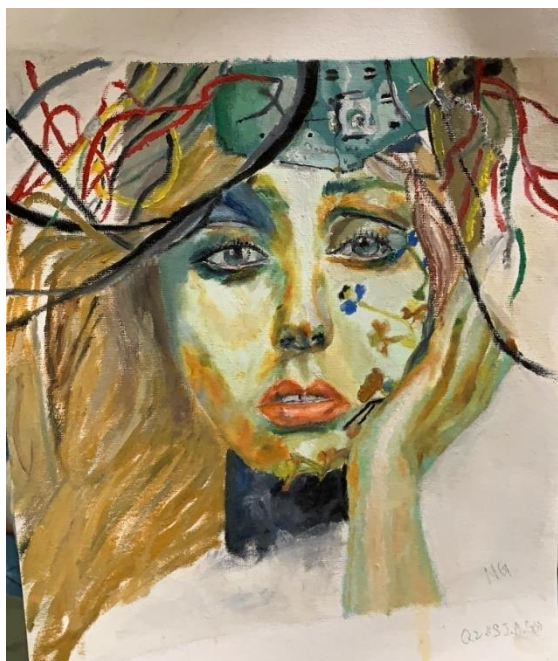
Illustrations

Assorted Illustrations

Hei Yiu NG



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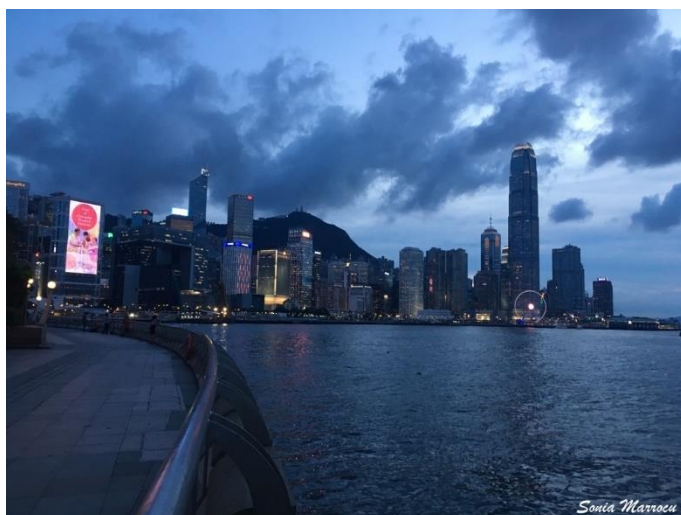
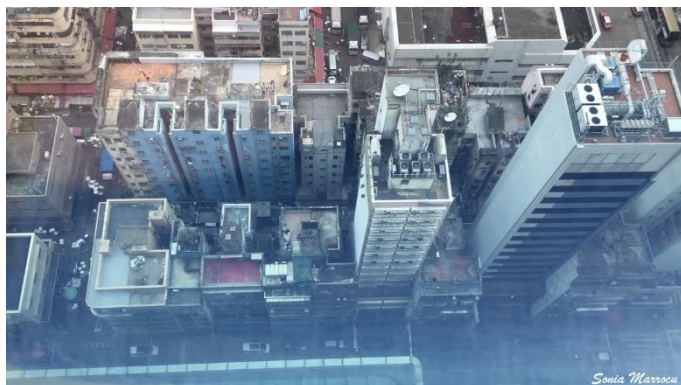


Photography

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Images of Hong Kong by Someone from Another Country

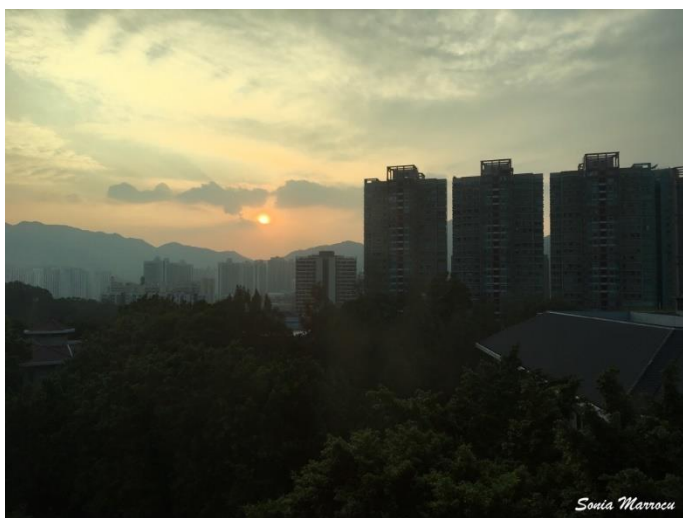
Sonia Marrocu



Bauhinia Rhapsody



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Bauhinia Rhapsody

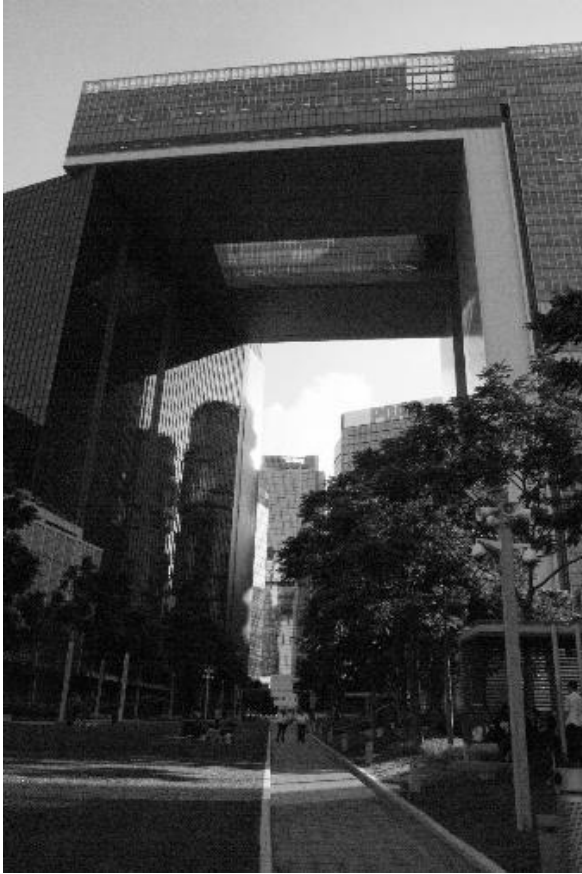


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Black & White

Sophia Kuemmerle



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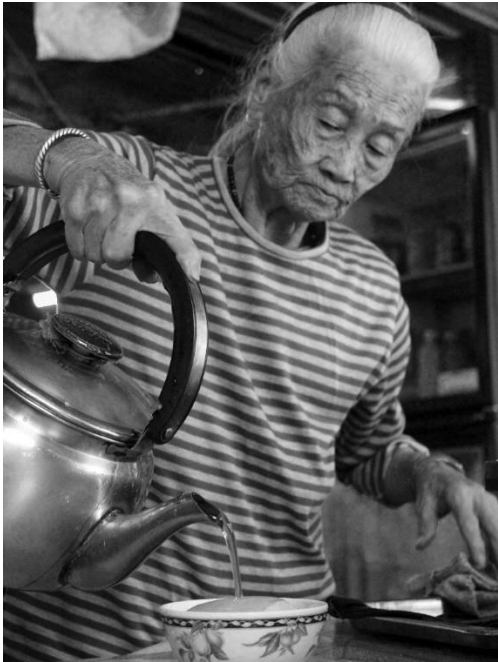
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Carmen Lee Nga Man

1. Blue Sky with Bare Trees @ Tsinghua University



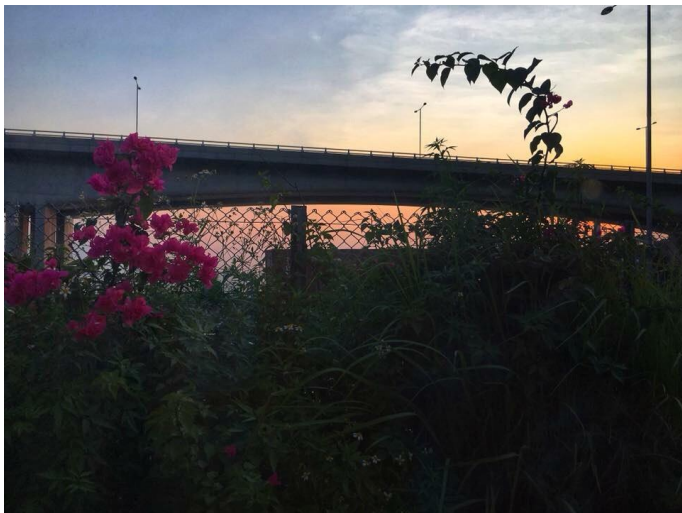
2. Curves



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The Roadside Beauty

Pin Lam KWOK

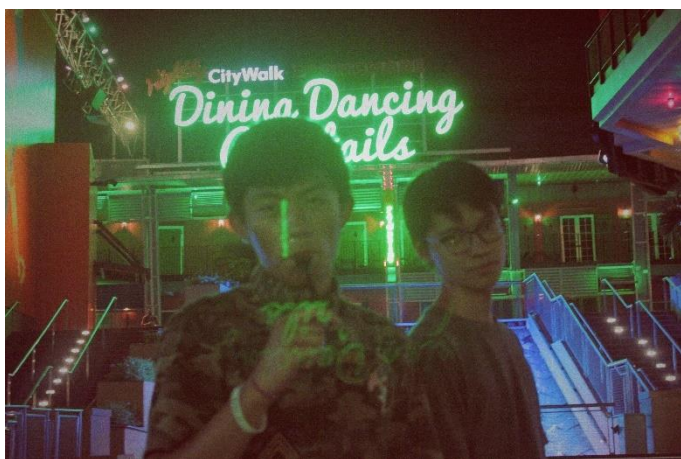


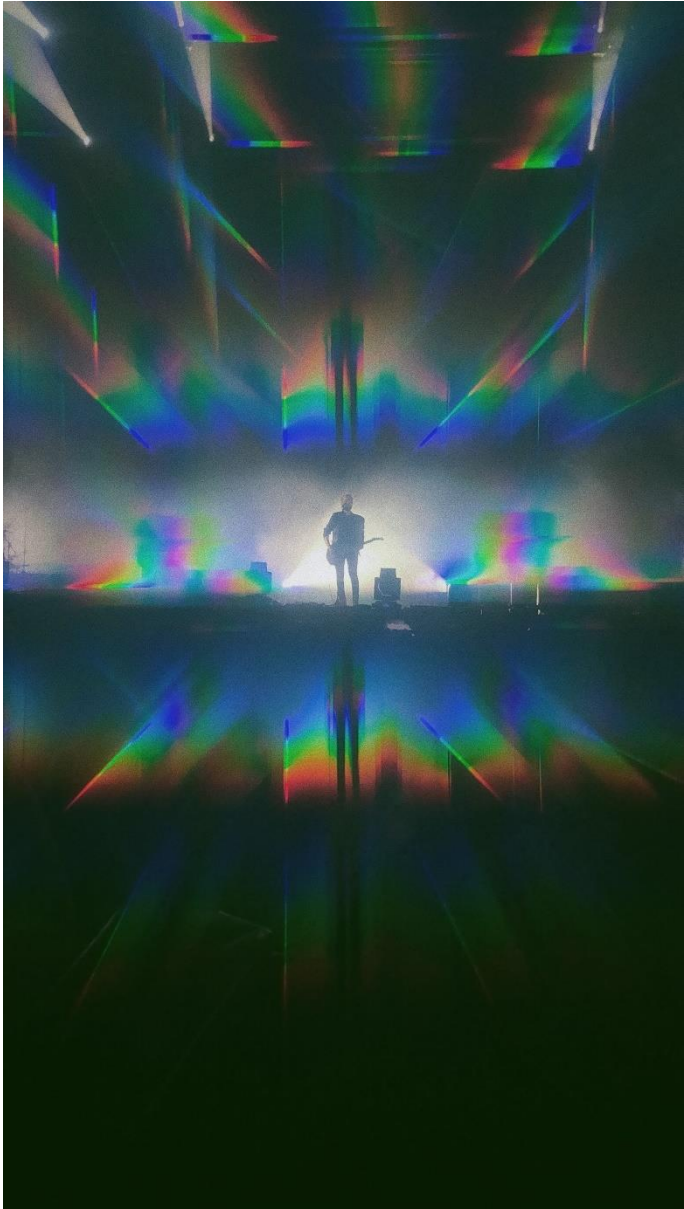
Various Images

Ienan



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Various Images

Vanessa Yeung





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Various Images

Carter McGrath





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My Fair Lady

My Fair Lady, Spring 2019 Production

The Lingnan University Department of English, under the guidance of Professor Mike Ingham, put on the Spring 2019 production of the musical *My Fair Lady*, an adaptation of George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion*, itself based on the ancient Greek myth. It was a stunning early April event, the cast playing to packed highly involved and roaringly entertained audiences over the two nights of performances.

Karina La'O starred as Eliza Doolittle, her voice offering a full range of notes, with Ian Tsui as Professor Higgins, and Ian Chung as his sidekick Pickering, also giving star performances. A touch of Bollywood also came through, with Neha Rai and her dance ensemble enlivening the play's embassy scene. Writer-in-Residence Michael Luongo gave a try at being the often-inebriated Alfred Doolittle, Eliza's father, but needed the aid of crib notes inside of his hat, with Mike Ingham helping him tremendously with his attempt at a cockney accent. Others gave such a wonderful turn at English accents and mannerisms that for a while, one could imagine one was no longer in Tuen Mun, but instead transported to Covent Garden, Mayfair and many other places in London where the play is set.

More details and other images are on the Department of English's website [<https://ln.edu.hk/eng>].

Here also is a selection of images from the practices and performances.

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Student Contributors

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Short Stories & Fiction

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Logan Tse
Emma Chau Nga Wing
Ieuan
Stephanie Gurung*

Short Stories Inspired By Songs and Poems

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Tang Cheuk Ying Janice
Cindy Lam Hiu Man
Chenny, Chae Lin KIM*

Poetry

*David McKenna
Carmen Lee Nga Man
Desmond TAN Kai Teck
Stephanie Gurung
Charlotte Chong
Kamal-Preet-Kaur
Emma Chau Nga Wing
Tooba Kousar
Chui Ming Wai
Hadarah Kane Alcantara Palencia
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Piu Lam KWOK
Ieuan
Vanessa Yeung
Carter McGrath*

A Note of Thanks

It's important to remember that this book is the work of many people, including those whose names do not appear in any of its pages.

The Lingnan University Department of English Writer-in-Residence Michael Luongo and the entire Bauhinia Rhapsody team would like to thank the many people without whom this book would have been impossible.

They include Mike Ingham, Yunte Huang, Andrew Sewell, and the many other professors in the Department of English, along with Ms. Wendy Wong and Ms. Joyce Hui, and Dean Emilie Yeh.

There are so many others throughout Lingnan University's various departments and offices who gave input, advice, and aided in recruiting new voices and visions for this book who are too numerous to name. A strong appreciation is also given for the work of all the previous Writers-in-Residence and their contributors whose Lingnan Literary Journals served as guides in putting this year's together.

Thanks also must be given to President Leonard Cheng, and to the Lingnan Foundation.

Please know that all of you are appreciated and recognized.