

英文写作的一点说明：

1985年到1986年，我写了我这一生中数量最多的英文，包括厚厚的一本英文日记，几篇英文小说，几首英文诗和约二十篇英文作文。

可惜的是，几篇英文小说全部遗失了。其中包括我自认为写得很不错的《THE STORY BURRIED IN THE MOUNTAIN》和《THE SPING》。

1986年，教我英文诗歌的美籍教师 MILLER 看了我写的英文小说，认为很不错，希望我将稿子给他，他争取在美国发表。当年6月底，MILLER 要回国，我正忙得起火，来不及抄一份，于是将原稿给了他。后来，MILLER 去了沙特阿拉伯，失去了联系，也永远失去了那几篇英文小说。

英文诗歌也大多遗失了，只剩下一篇。好在一些英文作文还在。

A Quiet Night

Why so quiet tonight
There's no barking and glimmering light
Only the sentimental wind fanning my face
And the smiling moon so bright

Why so quiet my dear
There's no touching and amorous stare
Only the soft breath caressing my hair
And the beating heart so near

1982年4月在四川大学时写的一首英语诗。

Future and I

I'd got to know a very popular English song "What will I be" even before I took to studying English. Soon it became one of my favorite English songs. "when I was just a little girl, I asked my mother what will I be .Will I be pretty ? Will I be rich ?.....The future is not now to say"

"Is the future really not now to say ?" I couldn't keep asking myself from time to time and feel somewhat puzzled. However, someday ago, in one of my spring dreams, I saw him—my future—and now I clearly know what he is.

I saw him, there, young, strong, handsome, full of life and vitality, fighting his way vigorously along a winding path. Attracted by him, I walked up before I knew it. He was so absorbed in his work that he didn't notice my approaching. "Hi .what are you doing here?" I called out. Without turning back, he answered: "I'm opening up a way to a large meadow." What a sonorous and powerful voice

he had! I moved nearer. “What are you going to do there?” I asked again. “First, I’ll bury the evil corpse of autocracy and tyranny, and plant the colorful flowers of democracy and freedom.” He turned back, gazing at me with more than passion and enthusiasm in his eyes. My heart gave a leap and he went on before I found my words. “Second, I’ll fight against poverty, ignorant and wars with all my might, and I’ll embrace freedom, equality and peace with all my love.” with these words, he made his way confidently and kicked the ugly gravel away. I managed to follow him. “It is simply wonderful to hear you”, I said, “Anything else?”

“Yes.” He answered, “These, I’ll see that these are schools, colleges and universities enough for all children and young persons. People, instead of worshiping power and money, will be adoring science and education. There, instead of walking, instead of lumbering, instead of wandering, I’ll be striding, I’ll be running, I’ll be flying. Flying far far away into the skies to probe the unknown universe, and traveling deep into the seas to visit the strange worlds!” I found myself deeply touched by his lofty ideal and great drive. But, looking over his shoulders, I saw perilous peaks and malicious clouds. Then I said: “Do you know, it is a rough and long way to go? There are dangerous beasts and thorny undergrowth on the way? You may be defeated or even lose your life before you reach it.” “No.” his answer was like a spring thunder reverberating in mountains. “I’ll never be defeated, because I’m young, strong, brave and most of all, I stand for truth and justice. Yes, I might be wounded or be knocked down from time to time. But I’ll never lose my life, because my name is Future, and future always belongs to me.”

He threw out his chest, raised his head, and I saw his eyes glowing, his face beaming—just as the bright rising sun! I felt my heart was beating excitedly, my blood was running fast. Now, I believe it is not a dream at all. I just can’t keep from calling out: “Future, let me go with you! Let me stride arm in arm with you! Let me fight the way along shoulder to shoulder with you! Here I open my arms and devote all my youth, all my love, all my life to you!

I love you—my beloved Future!”

注：这是我在1989年3月为学生参加重庆市高校第三届英语演讲大赛写的演讲稿。为了增强演讲效果，我用了许多分词结构。我辅导我的学生陈学梅逐字逐句练习，从音调到表情，从节奏到感情……

比赛时，竞争十分激烈，最后的结果，我们获得一等奖。

几个月后，震惊中外的“六四”运动爆发了……其结果是 autocracy and tyranny 取得了绝对胜利。

十八年后，当我读到文中 Future 的呼喊：“I’ll bury the evil corpse of autocracy and tyranny, and plant the colorful flowers of democracy and freedom.”时，心中百感交织……

(2007年8月31日)

Three Strugglers on a Path(1990 年)

I am hobbling on a rugged path in hazy weather. In front of me is Mr.Even, an old weak man wrapped in an old black robe, and behind is Mr.Morn, the youngest and strongest among us. Where does the path lead to? I can hardly tell, but looking back, I'm shocked to find it so rough, so barrow, so winding and soaked by tears and blood.

“Stop turning back, Mr.Mid! It's a great shame!” Said Mr.Morn in a resonant voice. “Look forward, we must find a broad road with fresh air and run...”

“Shut up!” rebukes in a hoarse voice, Mr.Even raises his thick black walking-stick—which supports his feeble body.” We must, on the contrary, always look back. It is the longest road in the world; it looks like a dragon; it is the road I took and has been on for all my life, it is gloriously...

Mr.Morn snorts, trying to stride forward, but only to meet the long black robe and the thick black stick. Thus, we have to, as usual, follow Mr. Even, hobbling slowly and painfully.

With arduous struggle, we at last struggle out of the long, dark and horrible valley, thirsty, hungry and exhausted.

There is something sweet in the air!

“Oh, look! Over there, green garden, red apples!” I call out in happy astonishment.

“Close your eyes and keep away from it The fruits there are poisonous!” Mr.Even warns with a grave voice.

“But they look nice and smell good.” I argue and start to run. Grasping me tightly in one hand and raising the stick high in another, Mr.Even starts his endless sermon: “We must resist all the temptations conscientiously and keep our spirits pure. ...Adam and Eve were driven out of the Garden of Eden only because they...”

Fed up to teeth with his outworn blackgown, I struggle to free myself from his hand but find the black stick over my head.

However, Mr.Morn is too strong to be held. Pushing Mr.Even down, he runs fast to the fruits.

Mr.Even, out of breath, picks himself up and hastily tries to hide some beautiful red apples that fall down from behind in his blackgown.

I am too astonished to speak!

A lovely girl with a torch high in one hand comes to us from the sea.

My eyes suddenly brighten up and my heart gives a leap. But afraid of the old black in front, I have to make a great effort to suppress the impulse to go to her. I can only greet her with a fervent whisper: “How do you do?” However, Mr.Morn, striding forward vigorously and with an ebullient “Hello”, reaches out his arms and is about to embrace her warmly.

Though very slow in progressing and obtuse in understanding, Mr. Even, this time is swift enough to react. Spring up forward as a fierce lion, Mr. Even knocks the glowing lovely girl back into the sea with his unique powerful stick. Then, sternly both in voice and countenance, he launches into his outworn sermon again: “...She looks wonderful but actually is the cause of ruin, ...How dare you welcome her without my OK...The road I’ve chosen and have been leading you onto is the best one in the world and you can enjoy the true freedom and a happy bright future is in store for us and...”

And we continue following Mr. Even on the “best road”, hobbling, staggering and sometimes creeping.

These are some tombs and borrows in front of us and some fallen heavy tombstones covered with bramble get in our way.

“Hi, What are you scheming to do!” A shouting like a thunder scares me almost to death when I have just taken out an imported knife and am about to cut off the bramble and remove the tombstones. “They are our ancestral tombstones. Without them, without us. How dare you touch them?”

I look up: before me, stands Mr. Even, raising his thick black walking-stick above my head. I am so angry that tears come out of my eyes, but I know perfectly the power of the stick—though the hand holding it is the weakest and oldest. I could do nothing but withdraw my new knife and creep slowly, painfully among the tombstones.

“I can’t bear it any longer!”

Roving like a fighting dragon, Mr. Morn jumps to his feet, cuts the bramble and shakes the tombstones that block his way.

The terrible stick falls on his back and the thorns prick his finger.

Blood drops on the path.

However, the tombstones have been removed and now a broad road spreads before us.

I draw a deep breath and hold out my hands anxiously to the front:

“Wait, wait for me, I’m coming!”

Mr. Morn, whose glowing complexion and blood spotted suit make a sharp contrast with Mr. Even’s pale face and black robe, cheers loudly:

“Let’s run directly towards the bright and warm place! We’ve wasted too much time!”

“No! You mustn’t! You will fall down and go astray.”

“I’m finished with you, Mr. Even! I will run without you! Make full use of your remaining time, Mr. Mid!” with these words Mr. Morn flies out like a released bird.

“I’m finished with you!” I shout excitedly and stride out.

A heavy stick hits my head and I fall down. It is—on my bed. I open my eyes—a dream after all. Outside is still dark, cold and quiet, the only sound is a faint cock—crow in distance.

此为我 1990 年为学生参加重庆市高校第四届英语演讲大赛写的演讲稿，仍

由我的学生陈学梅演讲。我们第二次获得了一等奖。

1989 之后，我把我的情感和希望隐藏在这篇寓意性的散文中。现在重读，有些啼笑皆非，更有些沉重绝望。最为典型的是，我文中寄予希望的、代表光明未来的“Mr.Morn”被“Mr.Even”成功改造，一个个成了金钱和物质的奴隶。

而我——Mr.Mid——独自立在这“path”上，看着自己一天天衰老的身影。

(2007 年 9 月 7 日)

My Mother

Standing before me is an ordinary woman. She looks rather old and weak, but within her thin arm, narrow shoulders and small body, there is a great strength, which can bear tremendous pressure that even a man might be afraid of. She seems to have nothing attractive: her face is wrinkled, her clothes are always plain. But she has a golden heart, which has been emitting beautiful light all the time.

This woman is my mother.

In 1957, my father, a leader in the government of Chongqing, was wronged and driven out of power, then forced to go to an out-of-the-way farm to do some hard physical labor as punishment. At that time, my mother, only 28 years old, had to bear the burden of supporting the whole family. Many families broke after the same man-made disaster fell upon them, but my mother refused to divorce my father as her leaders ordered and tried to force her to do. She said my father's spirit would have been broken if she had deserted him.

Later, from 1960 to 1962, people in China were suffering from a terrible famine—another disaster caused by CCP and Mao. Thousands and thousands died of hunger and my younger sister and my grandmother were two of those victims. Horrified by the death both in and out of her family, my mother shared her small portion of food with her remaining thin pale children, and at the same time she did even more hard work, trying to save her family. Undoubtedly she would have also died of hunger and overwork if my father hadn't been released in 1962.

Hardly had my mother given a breath of relief when the unprecedented disaster—the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution broke out. The horrible red storm immediately swept my father away and he became a prisoner again in that farm. My mother was being criticized day and night for her obstinacy—still living with a “contra revolutionary” husband. But whenever she came home she would take care of our study, ordering us to finish some reading and writing each day. (At that time all schools were closed for “making revolution”.) I could never forget, as long as I live, the forced smile and soft words she gave us and cold tears I happened to feel when I woke up at midnight.

The years passed like a long nightmare. Not until the smashing of “The Gang of Four” did my mother end her long suffering.

Now my mother looks older than she really is. Her face is wrinkled, her hair has become half grey, and above all, her hands are so rough that they look like the dry bark of an old oak tree. But in my eyes, my mother is the most beautiful woman in the world, always shining brightly before me. When I am staring at her with great love I couldn't help remembering what a famous Russian author—Golkey once said:

Let us admire them—Mothers! Admire their strength, admire their love... They foster the whole world with their breasts, with their sweat milk, with their great love. Without them, without the world!

1985年9月在重庆大学时写的作文

Biography

“Your son smashed again my window glasses on purpose!” a fat, cross-eyed woman, seizing a boy by one of his ears, shouted at the boy's mother. The poor mother apologized again and again with a forced smile. But the cross-eyed woman didn't drag her fat body away until she got the money for compensation.

“This boy will go to dogs and follow his father to prison!” She was still cursing outside the door.

The mother's face suddenly turned pale, and the boy was given a good beating instead of a poor supper that evening.

A few months later, a pink-nosed teacher strode in, smiling from ear to ear, “Congratulations, madam, since your son is one of the top students in our school. We decided to send him to an excellent middle school one year before his graduation. He will certainly have a brilliant future and do credit to your family!”

The mother lost her voice for happiness, only smiling from ear to ear.

The horrible red storm—the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution suddenly came just when he was ready to go to see his “brilliant future”. His family broke up again and he had to idle away his golden time day after day by the Yangtze River. He tore his school books into pieces and watched the resentful waves washing them away. For two years he did nothing but swim in the river, for which he cherished a deep love like for his mother. He used to go to her when he was insulted or beaten because of his “counterrevolutionary” father. She never despised and deserted him but let him drop his tears on her breast when he was missing his parents far away. She taught him how to endure loneliness, emptiness and hardship. It is impossible for him to forget her and the days with her.

When at last in a middle school, he found himself much changed:

withdrawn, reticent but rather deep and strong in spirit. He had no idea why he suddenly fell in love with poetry. The first poem he read aloud to his close friends was a long one which he thought excellent.

“It seems these are too many climaxes in your poem and we expected the end many times.” They all had the same opinion.

“That just keeps my poem exciting from the beginning to the end.” He argued with a disappointed tone. But since then he didn’t write any more for many years.

He also had no idea why he began to pay attention to girls, why he became rather active and humorous when there were girls near by. But he felt shy and humble, so he always pretended that he had no interest in girls. The result was that he made no girlfriends during his school days—even had no memory of talking with them face to face.

What he really obtained in middle school was scientific knowledge. He was the top student in the class, especially good at mathematics and physics. He began to get self-confidence and that “pink nose” reappeared from time to time in his mind’s eye.

With full confidence of success and beautiful dreams, he was about to knock the gate of a university. But, like a bolt from the blue, he was forced to go to countryside to do hard physical labor with peasants. “Punish your body to save your soul.” Who said that he couldn’t remember, but he could never forget as long as he lives the infertile land he farmed, the poor peasants he labored with, the dark and wet cottage he lived in, the terrible mental agony he experienced. Books of mathematics and the like were torn again into pieces and carried away by wild mountain wind. He took to drink and smoke; he became talkative and fond of singing, dancing, joking and laughing. “I’ve taken these,” He said sadly, “as weapons to resist the ‘cross-eye’, to resist the loneliness, emptiness, darkness and desperation inside my heart.” What he hated most were those imperious and greedy local leaders and officers; what he loved most was an unsophisticated girl who gave him much help as well as her love. It was there he tasted, in his life, the most painful tears and the unprecedented happiness. It was there he lost a lot and also learned a lot. His world-out-look changed as well as his personality. Those years in the countryside marks a turning point in his life.

At the age of 21, after spending much money, he was sent to a college in a small city. English was not his choice. What he really love was history and physics. He tried but failed to break off the “forced marriage”, which made him suffer greatly. Since then he has been doomed to swim for all his life in the vast and boundless sea of words and sentences.

At the age of 27, he at last married the girl he met in the countryside. He found it impossible to forget her. “She is not beautiful but her heart is.” He said.

Now, with a twinkle of an eye, gone are his promising but miserable childhood, valuable but insipid youth, together with those colorful hopes and dreams. Though he is pleased by many who know him he feels very pessimistic at the thought that he has approached the gate of middle age and achieved

nothing. “Both cross-eyed woman and pink-nosed woman were wrong.” He smiled indifferently. “I’m neither in prison nor in the limelight of the stage. I’m just an ordinary man and will be forever like thousands of my fellow countrymen. What I’m going to do is to go on swimming in the bundless sea—until my Father take my soul away.”

But he wishes on his tombstone such words would be gravely: “His last wish is that on his son’s tombstone in future there would be no such words: ‘PROMISSING but NOTHING’.”

1985 年在重庆大学英语助教班时的作文，美籍教师 LORRY 给我的评分是“A”；评语是：

Very nice opening. Very nice closing.

A creative essay! I especially liked your images of the cross-eyed and pink-nosed woman.

只是，写了此文的 17 年之后(2002 年)，我没有“in the limelight of the stage, but in prison!”

A Teahouse in China

“Pa!” a loud sharp sound suddenly comes from somewhere and then a harsh voice follows: “Listen! Every one……”

What has happened? You couldn’t help stopping to look around. Soon, you see an old and low room, in which there are many old men sitting around a speaker. You may wonder: What is this room? Who are those people? What are they doing there?

Being prompted by curiosity, you step in and find yourself in a dim, antique and poor-conditioned room. Around you are dark and dirty walls with two or three broken windows. In a corner squats a big and ugly stove with a few steaming teapots on it. On the ground, which is always dirty and wet, are placed square and wet tables and long wooden stools. Some of them are carved but most of them have long or short cracks. The smoke and steam in the air are so thick that the lights appear pale yellow and the room looks dusky.

As pale yellow and old as the room are the tea-drinkers. Most of them are men above 55 years old. The dim light in their eyes matches well with the light in the room, and their dark, old-fashioned dresses and the color of the room are perfectly coordinated. From time to time, they lift the covers of the teacup with two fingers, and with their eyes narrowed, brows knitted and faces wrinkled, they puff away the tea-leaves flouting in the surface of the water and take a sip. Many of them sit here all the day puffing, sipping, smoking and talking. During evenings, they, listening to a story-teller and won’t go home until rather late at night.

The function of the story-teller is similar to that of those girls who sing songs in a bar or night club in western countries. But far from being good-looking like

those well-dressed girls, he appears old as his audiences and “colorful” as the room. The stories he tells with a rather harsh voice are always about ancient Kings, Queens, heroes and the like. He is usually at home with his stories—words and sentences run out of his mouth just like water running down his audiences’ throats. Instead of holding a megaphone that those girls use in bar, he has a small piece of wood, with which he beats the desk and makes a loud sharp “pa” when he thinks he has reached a key or turning point. He also uses “pa!” or “pa! pa! pa! pa!……” when he sees someone fall into a doze, or make too much noise, or he himself forgets what to come next. So, during his telling you will have too many “pa”.

Yes, the “pa” doesn’t sound as sweet as the girls’ singing in bars, but together with the noise of puffing, sipping and buzzing forms an atmosphere in which these old people idle away their lonely days or find a shelter of escaping from isolation, from emptiness or from the fear of death. They take comfort from talking with each other, hearing the sharp and “exciting” “pa” or simply from seeing each other. So, rooms like this—we call them “Teahouses” and you can find them everywhere in China—are old man’s “paradise”, which reflect one part of Chinese life.

Ladies First

a short play

Sence:

A well-dressed young man is loafing about in the street with hands in pockets. Suddenly, he sees a very pretty young girl standing at a bus stop in front of him. He quickly takes out a small mirror and looks at himself in it. Then holding a book in hands and “reading” it wholeheartedly, he walks directly to the girl.

Girl: Look out! You are bumping into someone!

Young man: Oh! I’m sorry, but I’m so absorbed in my studying that I didn’t notice you. Are you waiting for the bus ?

Girl: Yes

Young man: It so happens that I’ll take it.

Girl: I wonder why the bus hasn’t come yet ?

Young man: Don’t worry, the later the bet……oh, no! Could you please tell me where you are going ?

Girl: (knitting her brows) I’m afraid you……

Young man: I’m sorry I have a knack for putting my foot in my mouth, but my heart is always in the right place and I……

Girl: There, comes the bus!

Young man: (says to himself) Why on earth do you come so soon this time ?!
(Many people crowded in the door of the bus)

Young man: It's so crowded, let me help you.

Girl: Thank you.

Young man: (forcing his way with all his might) Hi! Wait a moment! Let this lady first. Who's pushing?! Don't you see the lady here ?
(At last they get into the bus.)

Girl: All seats are occupied. We have to stand.

Young man: Hold on to the bus, please. I'll see about it.
(to a man) Excuse me, would you mind offering your seat to... No?! selfish fellow!
(then to a boy) Will you be so kind as to let that lady take your seat ? You must know "Ladies First" and you should learn to be a gentleman. Yes! Come here, Madam! I've found a seat for you!

Girl: Thank you! You are really very kind and helpful. But how about you ?

Young man: Never mind, standing beside you, I feel I can stand as long as...
(A sudden brake and the young man falls forward)

Girl: Oh, dear!

Young man: What's up ?! You driver! Why the hell did you brake all the sudden without any warning ?

Girl: Did you get injured?

Young man: My head bumped against the back of the seat. How about you ?

Girl: Only a heart attack.

Young man: I would certainly bring trouble to that sad-looking driver and the company if you got injured.

Girl: It's not the driver's fault. But I feel sick in this bus. It's so crowded and hot.

Young man: How about getting off of the next stop and having some soft drinks until the rush hour passes ?

Girl: That's a good idea.
(They get off and walk into a public house.)

Young man: Let's take the interior seats.

Girl: Oh, no. It's cooler near the door and there's an electrical fan here.

Young man: Being kept fanned by an electrical fan will do you no good. Let's go to that corner. There is less noise inside. Take that seat and I'll buy some soft drinks and cake.....Oh, no, no, I'll pay for it.
(He soon comes back with the things.)

Young man: (with a refined manner and a graceful move of his right arm) Please, Ladies first.

Girl: You are really very polite.

Young man: Do you know in western countries, well-bred and educated men—they are called "Gentlemen" or "Knights"—are refined and courteous, always say "Ladies First" to show their good training and.....

Girl: You must have been well-bred and educated.
Young man: Er...Er...I'm afraid I couldn't say that. But both my parents are well-bred and educated professors, and very rich of course. They've taught me a good deal and I've just finished my courses at Chongqing University.
Girl: (admiring) You are studying very hard—even reading while walking.
Young man: You know "Time is money". I must make full use of my time to get something.
Girl: You are really very diligent. What book are you reading just now?
Young man: Well...Well...I, oh, Where's the book ?
Girl: You must have left it on the bus.
Young man: Never mind. I have as many books as the stars in the sky. I think I can lend you some to read. Oh, may I have the honor to get to know your name and address ?
Girl: Yes, please call me Liying. I'm living at No.3 Xinghua Road.
Young man: What's a nice name, I LOVE it. My name is Hulai, working in an important office. I earn a lot of money and am still single.....
Girl: (in a low voice) Yes, Mr.Hu, but I'm afraid.....
Young man: Don't be afraid, Miss Li. You will feel as safe as at home with me. They say I'm a strong young man who is afraid of nothing.
Girl: (face red as fire) Well, yes, Mr.Hu, that is what I appreciate most. It seems to me you are a man that a girl can depend on, but I.....
Young man: (drawing closer and as hot as fire) But I don't know why there is something very special striking my heart for the first time in my life when I got the first sight of you. Dear Li, I have a nose for knowing that you are just the girl I'm looking for. Dear Li, I vow you to make you happy and to protect you as long as.....
(Suddenly there is a terrible explosion and the public house is full of smoke.)
Girl: Fire! Fire!! The house is on fire!
Young man: Hurry up! Run to the door!
Girl: Wait! Mr.Hu. Help me out!
(All the people run to the door and it is almost blocked by packed escaper.)
Young man: (quickly jumps over the tables) Help yourself!
Girl: (shouting desperately) Wait! Help!! Mr.Hu! "Ladies First"!
Young man: (fighting his way to the door and almost reaches it) This time gentlemen first!
Girl: Ah. (Faint)

这是我 1985 年在重庆大学英语助教班时的作文，美籍教师 LORRY 给我的

评分是“A”评语是：

I like your play!

O'Henry, watch out! Here's another short story writer with surprise endings!

1991年，重庆市高校举行英语剧的汇演，我辅导我的两名学生排演了这个剧。获得了二等奖。一等奖发给了第三军医大学，他们演了莎士比亚《哈姆雷特》中的一个片段。

在强手如林中我们获得二等奖，为学校争了光，学校奖励我100元钱，教研室扣去50，我收获50元。

Complaint Letter

No.21.Xinghua Road

Chongqing

November 5, 1985

Mr. H. N. Chen, Manager,
Central Food Shop
Chongqing

Dear Mr. Chen,

Three days ago, while passing by your shop, I was tempted by a colorful advertisement in front of your shop, which says: **NEWLY-MADE MUSHROOM CAN, FRESH, TASTY, INVIGORATIVE, UNIQUE, ESPECIALLY GOOD FOR WHETTING YOUR APPETITE.** Wow! Thinking of my little daughter's poor appetite, I bought, in spite of the high price, ten cans! That evening, no sooner had I opened the can than a very strange smell struck my nostril. I comforted myself by remembering the word "UNIQUE" on the advertisement and still urged my daughter to take one mouthful after another. The "unique" can did perform wonders quickly—hardly had we finished one meal when my daughter felt sick and started to vomit! Soon, my wife followed. When finally my turn came, the poor little girl almost vomited her whole stomach out! Dear Mr. Chen, I regret to inform you that my poor daughter is still in the hospital and my wife has to take some days off looking after her. Yesterday, I called your shop assistant but he denied it was the can causing the trouble. He even suggested that I try it again if I didn't believe him. I admit that I am not heroically enough as to make another experiment with the can. What I want is that: first, you should pay the medical treatment for my daughter and the bonus which my wife will not get for the absence from office; second, let me return to you the remaining cans for a full refund; finally, I hope you stop selling that "UNIQUE" can and take "TASTY" advertisement away.

Trusting you will give your prompt attention to the matter and answer my

requests early.

Yours faithfully,
Tan Song

Central Food Shop
Chongqing
November 7, 1985

Mr. Tan Song
No.21 Xinghua Road
Chongqing

Dear Mr. Tan,

Having received your letter I immediately looked into the matter, and now I am sorry to say that it was the can that caused the trouble. Here I show my great regret and sympathy for you and your little daughter. As for me, I would like to meet your requests as early as possible, but you know it is not all our fault. I have to consult this matter with the factory that produced the can. Please wait, I will call you later. By the way, you will not find the can and the advertisement any more if you pass by our shop.

Yours faithfully,
H. N. Chen

1985 年在重庆大学时写的“命题作文”。

A Letter to Nowhere

Dear Mr. Justice and Ethics,

With the glowing scarlet letter “A”, I, a “corrupted” woman, will be driven out of your “pure land” tomorrow. Out of shame, I should go away quickly and quietly, but on behalf of the highest grade “A” bestowed by you, I feel it impolite not to give you something in return before my leaving.

Yes, I seem to deserve the scarlet A, because what I did violates the morality and law, creates a bad influence on the school where I have taught diligently for thirteen years, causes much trouble to another “happy family” and brings misfortune to my family and myself. You appear right that it is I who created the tragedy and should be punished.

However, as Dreiser points out in his book “Sister Carrrie”, an unjust society only sees a single point in a long tragedy, you only see the ending of the tragedy—that is, I, a married woman, intrigued with a married man and thus lost my job and degraded myself. But, dear Mr. Justice and Ethics, why don't

you bother yourselves a little bit to open your eyes widen and see what is the real cause that has brought about the tragedy ? Since I am now an outcast and will never return to your “pure land”, I am not afraid of telling you what I want to say. Thirteen years ago, I graduated from a university. At that time—that was during the horrible Proletarian Culture Revolution—an intellectual was generally regarded as a bourgeois element. “The more knowledge you have, the more reactionary you are.” was a household politic watchword. The Party leaders in the school I was teaching at kept on reminding me of that and urging me all the time to shift myself on the proletarian ground by uniting with a proletarian element—a carpenter in the school, who had only a little primary education. “Our great leader Chairman Mao instructs us,” they used to began with this “that intellectuals must combine themselves with workers and pasents, and remould their bourgeois world outlook conscientiously.……See, you are a bourgeois intellectual, why don’t you carry Chairman Mao’s instruction into concrete practice?” Unsophisticated, young and weak as I was at that time, I at last gave up and carried their concrete instruction into concrete practice—broke off with my true lover—a “bourgeois” classmate of mine in the university, and married the “proletarian” carpenter—a nephew of one of my party leaders. Since our marriage, or in a better phrace, our politic combination, my “bourgeois” would outlook and emotions have been touched little, because, besides axe, wood and furniture, my husband could hardly find many proletarian words. So, my spirit and emotions have always been very very lonely and hungry. Anyhow, I didn’t sue for a divorce but was carrying the heavy cross silently like thousands of other Chinese woman. Unfortunately, two years ago, I met again my former lover, who, like me, has a very unhappy marriage. Being with him I feel the life is full of meaning and happiness, and I realized further what a terrible error I made or was forced to make. I went to the court, but instead of getting sympathy and obtaining a divorce, I was criticized as a disloyal wife, an irresponsible mother and a fickle woman of easy virtue, who dispises physical working people and seeks for bourgeois freedom in love……Sad to say, those condemnations failed to put out the loving fire in my heart and I feel it impossible not to communicate with him—my should-be husband. And the ending—the only scene you saw in the long tragedy—was that: I was caught red-handed like a thief while steeling love with him. Dear Mr. Justice and Ethics, after hearing the whole story, do you still think that I am really a corrupted woman who has committed some unforgivable crime ?

But, I’ve been unforgivably punished—lost my job and received the scarlet letter **A**. A weak and helpless woman as I am, what could I do against you “just” judgment? However, before my leaving, I couldn’t help questioning you: Why do you never condemn and punish the society which caused the tragedy but always raise your lash and beat hard the heroes or heroines in the tragedy ? Why are you so tolerant toward the evil power of the society which forces an innocent person on the road to crime but so cruel to him when he has to touch the crime ? Why don’t you come when some government officials murdered indirectly an

innocent creature, and why are you never absent when some common people make some mistakes, such as adultery? Why on earth do you always judge a person's qualities mainly according to his private life but ignore the really bad ones, such as hypocrisy, selfishness and cruelty? Why do you prefer to make many efforts in keeping an unhappy or loveless marriage than to prevent it from happening or to break off it? Don't you know that the wedding is not always the symbol of happiness and divorce does not always mean tragedy—especially in our society that is full of feudal poison? Dear Mr. Justice and Ethics, I am a woman with flesh and blood, with strong desires for love, freedom and happiness—which are the inalienable rights of human beings—but the society deprives me of the rights and the law prevents me from obtaining them—in this case, what could I do besides steeling them—if I don't want to enduce silently to death like thousands of other women who are in the similar position?

However, tomorrow, I, a “corrupted” woman, will leave your corrupted “puce land” with the glowing scarlet letter “A”, for which I do feel far more shame to you than to myself. As a matter of fact, I will take that beautiful red “A” as the symbol of Angle, Adoration and Affections, with which I will be hugging my true lover like Paul and Francis in the cold-wind-beating hell described by Dandi. But what should I do in return for your bestow before I go there? Here are two statements by TOLSTON and Hugo, which is the perfect gift remained to you:

Society committs far more crimes than individuals do to it.

Law makes more and worse errors in punishment than those who make mistakes.

Goodbye Forever.

Yours truly victim

Hester Prynne

1985年在重庆大学时的作文，美籍教师 LORRY 给我的评分是“A”；评语是：

Your point-of-view is very well argued and supported in this creative essay. I enjoyed it. I think it's a nice piece of writing, I would like a copy of this also. **Is this all your own writing?**

The Summer Nights of My Childhood

I spent my childhood on the south bank of Chongqing. My family shared an old two-storied house with five other families. By the house, there was a terrace covered by a big tree—Huangguo Shu—which was said to be two-hundred years old. Every summer evening after supper, we gathered, with bamboo chairs and beds, under the tree, enjoying the cool. Very often, we had our suppers—usually rice porridge, fried beans and just vegetables—on the terrace and shared

chatting with other families while eating. It was natural that you be invited to have supper with other family or be given a big bowl of cool porridge with beans if you came back late or couldn't cook that evening for some reasons.

After the supper when the sparrows in the tree stopped chirping and the stars began twinkling high above the sky; came the most lively and exciting time. Now, all people in the house—about thirty all together—were sitting or lying under the tree like a big family. We children were running here and there, shouting, giggling or singing; fathers and mothers used to talk about their works and exchange news; grandpas usually smoked their pipes all the time with a cup of tea, and grandmas kept on beating their legs with cattail leaf fans to drive mosquitoes away. Besides, there were frogs croaking in a pool near by and many summer insects chirping everywhere. At that time, none of the families had refrigerators, tape recorders, T.V. sets (we even hadn't heard of these) and electric fans. The only luxury we had was an old two-banded radio, which belonged to Zhang's family. Since it was old and touched by too many hands, the radio used to stop speaking and singing without reasons. Then we always called out loudly: "Come, bother Li, the radio has stopped working again!" Brother Li, who was studying in a high-middle school, usually came at once with a helpful and proud air on his face. Every summer evening, under the tree and with the mixed sounds of the laughter, the chatting, the chirping, the burning pipes, the beating fans and the old radio, we held our "traditional" summer evening party.

What our children enjoyed most at the "party" were two things. One was to play the catching and naming game. The game required all the children to move slowly around the big tree with at least one hand touching it—except the one whose eyes were blindfolded with a black bandage. The eye-covered child must catch one of the children around the tree and call out correctly the name of child. Then they exchanged their positions.

One evening, I was caught by the little pretty girl of Wang's family. I held my breath. Her soft warm hands were touching me excitingly. She touched my hair, my eyes, my ears, my mouth, my neck, my shoulders, my clothes, my hands……I could hear the fast beating of her heart and feel her rapid breath. Suddenly, she called out: "Brother Tan!" and then tore off the black bandage quickly. "Brother Tan! Brother Tan! I've caught! I've caught!" She jumped with joy, her pretty eyes were shining like bright stars in the dark. Then, it was my turn to be blindfolded and seek……I find, since then, I have been seeking something that are so happy, so exciting, so touching, so innocent and so bright.

The second thing that took our hearts away was to listen to stories. On all most every summer night, we would ask uncles or grandparents, or elder brothers and sisters for some stories. We used to sit around them with our eyes fixed on their mouths, for fear to miss even a single word. If they said no or no more, we would shake their arms and knees or ingratiate ourselves into their favour by fanning them or pouring water into their teacups until they finally said yes.

One of the stories that has passed over thousands of years is about two

bright stars in the sky. It is said, long long ago, a beautiful daughter of the Jade Emperor in the heaven fell in love with a diligent and honest cowboy on the earth. She flew down from the heaven and married the cowboy secretly. However, the Jade Emperor and his wife could never allow this “unmatched” marriage to exist. The daughter was caught by her cruel and imperious mother and forced to fly back to the heaven. Having heard this, the cowboy, with the help of his old cow, also flew up into the sky to pursue his wife. While he was about to reach her, the cruel mother created a wide river between them—which separates them forever. Later, the mother, moved by their true love, allowed them to meet once a year at the night of June 7. On that night, all the magpies on the earth fly up to the sky to form a bridge for the miserable couple.

Another falktale that touched me deeply was about the tree—Huang guo shu—why it always stands on stones. Old grandma Li told us that in ancient time, there was a bride whose husband was forced to leave home to build palaces for an emperor. The girl stood on a rock everyday, waiting, gazing with the sun, the wind and the rain. But her husband never came back and she finally, when old and weak, was found dead in a cold winter on the rock, still standing and gazing. The next spring, a strange tree grew up on the rock and that is called “huang guo shu” ever since.

Those fairy stories, falktales, jokes and scientific fancies really opened a colorful world before us and took our hearts, our imaginations far out into the vast, stary sky.

After the stories, it was usually rather late at night. Ships in the Yangtze River stopped going and sounding sirens. White, soft moonlight was flowing quietly like a stream down to the tree and filtering through the leaves. A very light mist overspread that small pool, from which fogs were still croaking. Some old ones went back to their rooms, but since the summer nights of Chongqing are very hot, most of us remained on the terrace for the whole night. I often fell into colorful dreams gradually with the fanning of my grandmother and the slightly moving moonlight that filtered through the leaves and cast on my small bamboo bed.

Sometimes I would suddenly woke up at midnight. With my sleepy eyes half opened, I saw blurred, though the brunches and leaves, the stary sky. When soft night wind gently shaked the tree, the whole sky seemed swaying. I couldn't tell where I was lying—on the terrace or half above in the sky. I didn't fear to sleep outside nor wake up at midnight, for I knew, besides me, there were so many uncles, elder brothers and there—the tree—which was covering us and guarding us loyally all the time.

However, one midnight I was woken up and somewhat frightened—all adults got up, bustling about and making much noise. What's the matter? Soon I saw Grandpa Chen lying on a bed pale-faced. He had suddenly fell very ill and lost his consciousness. Uncle Zhang decided to carry Chen to hospital immediately. All agreed. Some were tieing two poles to a bamboo bed, on which grandpa Chen would be carried; some were fanning him slowly and putting cool towels on his

forehead; some were helping to pick up things needed in the hospital. In fifteen minutes, they all vanished into the darkness—only we small children and some old grandpas and grandmas remained on the terrace. That night I couldn't fall into sleep again; I felt unprecedentedly empty and lonely, and afraid. I kept staring into the darkness, wanting nothing in the world so much as to hear their footsteps and their voices. When they at last came back, telling us that grandpa Chen was out of danger, the red sun was beginning to rise from behind the tree, touching and shining on the tired but happy faces.

Yes, summers in Chongqing are unusually hot—even at nights. But I never complained about the hot summer nights of my childhood on the south bank. On the contrary, I was always looking forward to them, enjoying them and missing them. It was under that old big tree that I tasted the sweetest rice porridge, heard the most melodious of voices, saw the most beautiful faces and dreamed the happiest dreams in my life. Now, that old and deeply-rooted tree—Huang guo shu—has been cut off, that six-family-shared house has been pulled down—they are replaced by a tall, big gray building which there are many separate and closed apartments in with bright lights, T.V. sets, refrigerators, electrical fans and tape recorders. However, the roots of that tree have tooted deeply in my body, they can't be cut off or replaced, I will treasure them as long as I live—the beautiful memories of the summer nights of my childhood.

1986年在重庆大学时的作文

The Problem of Raising Children Today

After “ liberation”(1949), we didn't take any measures to control the birth fate until about 10 years ago. Having realized the serious problems caused by large population, our government formulated a rather hard policy about birth control—that is, each couple is only allowed to have one child. Considering our 1.2billion population that is still growing rapidly, this policy is desperately necessary. However, we recently find that this also has caused some new problems, one of them is about child raising.

Only 15years ago, each family, on the average, had four or five children. One of them might get more “sunshine” from his parents, but more of them could by no means become the centre of the family. Today, the only child himself in the family becomes the indispensable “sun”, and all the “planets”—other family members as parents and grandparents—are revolving around him. In many families in cities, you could easily see the true scene that the small and short “general” is ordering his big or old “soldiers” around. If he wants anything that his parents can offer, he must get it; if he tells them to do something for him, they should obey. Once he is refused, he never hesitates to use his powerful weapons—crying for hours or refusing to eat. Fearing to hurt the “invaluable treasure”, parents usually surrender and the “general” wins one victory after

another. Gradually, he really obtains the quality of a domineering and self-important “general”.

However, no matter how domineering and self-important he could be, he is the apple in the eye of his parents. Tremendous cares are taken of the “only apple”: if he has a sneeze the mother begins to worry whether he catches a cold or not, or the father is ready to take him to hospital; if he looks a little bit thinner, the parents would wonder if he has enough nutrients. These “planets” always urge him to take more than he really needs, but seldom let him know the words “spank”, “slap”, “clobber” and “beat”. Even when he does something wrong, they feel reluctant to touch the pampered “apple”, and once he has a quarrel or fight with other children, they usually stand on his ground.

In comparison with the parents ten years ago, parents today pay much more attention to the school education of their children, but, on the other hand, they, more or less, ignore the importance to foster their children’s ability of standing on their own feet. They are making every effort to make their children live as comfortable as possible, to arrange everything well for them which they could manage themselves. Nowadays, it is common that many children over eight or nine even haven’t washed their own handkerchiefs or socks, let alone to do other housework or take part in some physical labors. But they usually get far more money from their parents than the children of the same age 15 years ago. This “rich” generation are not used to hard work but used to be served and be taken care of. So, these “domineering generals” nurtured and bred in greenhouses are also dependent and delicate.

Our nation is said to be well-known for its hardworking and standing hardship. However, with so many “only sun”, “domineering general” and “delicate apple” growing up. What changes would take place in the future ?

My First Day in Daxian

The train was rumbling fast towards Daxian—a small city in mountains in the north of Sichuan. Sitting by the window and gazing at the moving hills and the gray winter sky, I felt the rhythm of the wheels on the rails sounded like “Back, Back, Back, coming, coming, coming”. Through a small hole in the window glass, cold wind was blowing on my hot face and I felt as if I were flying in the air to Daxian. Though I knew nothing about Daxian, it now meant the end of my bitter countryside living and the bright start of a new life, meant a beautiful college with its welcome gate open to me, meant all the burning hopes and vague dreams for the future.

“Is it true that I will not dig in those barron mountains but read and write in a clear classroom of a college ?” I asked myself a thousand times.

It was dark when the attendant announced we were getting to the

terminus—Daxian. My heart was throbbing fast when I imagined again the scene that some teachers and students came running to meet me.……welcome slogans, hot cup of tea, introduction, smiling faces, shaking hands, college bus……oh, I should be having the time of my life!

Is this a railway station of a CITY ? Standing on the small, ugly platform with a few yellow lights here and there, I felt puzzled. Not a single figure came to meet me; all the passengers were running like a flock of sheep towards a dark tiny bus stop outside the stone fence. I looked around—not at all any sign of meeting new students, only cold evening wind from mountains was raising some pieces of deserted paper. In five minutes, all passengers had gone-----except me, standing stock still like a fool with only my shadow lying on the platform.

A man in blue uniform stepped up to me and questioned suspiciously: “why don’t you go to take the bus to town ? Show me your ticket!”

Why! So many passengers lined there waiting for a bus ? In the darkness, it looked like a long and fat dragon lying on the ground.

With two heavy pieces of luggage in both hands and a big one on my back, I staggered to the “tail of the dragon”. A quarter of an hour later, a bus came and picked up only a dozen of passengers. “I must stay here waiting all night.” I thought. Under the cover of the darkness, I sneaked to the “head of the dragon”. Squatting outside the “dragon”, I pretended I didn’t want to take the bus. Twenty minutes passed and another bus came. No sooner had the door opened than I sprang to my feet and forced my way to it. Thanks for the hard practice and precious experience of scrambling for buses in Chongqing, I, ignoring the curses behind my back, succeeded in packing in.

The bus began to move, I looked out of the window—those poor passengers still stood there with long faces.

I didn’t notice until I got off the bus that two of my buttons in my new clothes, which I put on specially for my new life, were torn off.

“Could you please tell me where Daxian Teachers College is ?” politely I asked a woman who was selling tea by the street.

“College ? No, no college in Daxian.”

“Yes, the admission notice says Daxian Teachers College.” I took out a piece of paper in a hurry.

“I’ve never heard of it.”

I went to ask several others and the answers were the same. I suddenly felt as if I were an unsophisticated countryside girl deserted by a man who lured her into the city.

All the hotels were taken up by thousands of people back from their Spring Festival holidays, even the floors of corridors were covered with lying passengers. I was thinking to find an empty long bench in a bus station for the night, but I

remembered my miserable experience of being picked up by policemen before.

What could I do ? Where could I go ?

Seeing a film of sweat on my forehead, an old man suggested sympathetically:

“There is a teachers school, not a college, three miles away. You may go there.”

Twenty minutes later, I was out of the city on a rough road without light. The luggage seemed to become an unbearable burden and I was sweating all over. Lumbering along for another twenty minutes, I found to my great surprise that I was in the countryside again! On both sides of the road were vegetable fields; in distance came dogs' barking. But what horrified me most was that I lost my way in a cross road and could not find anyone for information. I dropped my heavy bedding roll on the ground and flopped on it. From the dark mountains in front the cold wind of winter night was blowing through the bold branches of a tree by my side; one or two faint stars were trembling all alone in the wide and dark sky. In a flashing moment, I saw my father's trembling hands when he held my admission notice and the happy tears in my mother's eyes.

“I never thought they would at last allow my child to college.”

I felt a lump in my throat and I bent my head with my hands on my checks.

“Hi! What are you doing here ?”

Policemen! I sprang to my feet instinctly.

It was sometime before I saw blurred there were three persons around me. My heart returned to its right place when I found they were not policemen but ordinary peasants—one of them was a girl.

“I……I'm looking for the teachers college, but……but……”

“Why so late and all alone ? well, follow us, we'll pass it……”

“pass—a college?!” my heart was suddenly throbbing madly.

“Yes, it was established only a few days ago.”

Is this a college ? I felt puzzled again while starrng at the “gate”—there were only two old broken brick pillars and a few new words written on one of them “DAXIAN TEACHERS COLLEGE”. Stepping into the “gate”, I found I was in front of a dirty yellow house without any light. Deadly silent like a graveyard, I heard the only sound was my footsteps and the whiffing of the wind.

Standing there like a ghost, I wondered whether I was in a dream or not.

I knocked gently then rapped rapidly the door on which there was a piece of red paper saying, “This is the place for recruits to check in.” The “host” was at last waked from his warm winter dreams.

“I, I never expected someone would come so late.” He muttered with eyes half open.

The dormitory was on the other side of the campus. I kept looking around with my eyes widely open when passing through the campus. Good gracious me, the “beauty” of the college almost took my breath away. There were only three or four small buildings but numberless broken bricks scattering on the earth ground (I stumbled over one and almost fell) ; strip of torn paper hung everywhere and there was a nasty smell in the air……Fortunately, it only took me five minutes to get through the whole campus.

The door opened; rubbing his sleeping eyes, one of my roommates lit an oil lamp. All my roommates were sons of peasants. Am I back in the countryside again ?

“There were only 150 students in our college and we have to wait a month before we can borrow some teachers of English from other schools.” One told me in a strong countryside accent. One of them was trying hard to ask me “What’s your name” in English but failed. I had no heart at all to talk, and I didn’t like English—which I knew nothing but a few words. I made up my bed quickly and got into it without washing, without supper, even without a sip of drink.

The oil lamp was puffed off; darkness and silence ruled the world again. From distance came a few faint barks of a dog. I closed my eyes, tired body, restless mind. Thousands of scenes reappeared before my mind’s eye: three year’s longing and struggling for college, five hundred yuan spent in “paving the way” to it, admiring eyes of some friends, smiling faces of sisters, trembling hands of my parents, lingering stares of my girl friend……

There was seemingly some moisture in my eyes. I was struggling hard to suppress the tears. “Why should you— a man grown up in the year of social upheaval and suffering—be so cowardly and feel so miserable ?” I questioned myself. “ Haven’t you been stunned many a time by cruel reality and bloody facts before ? Don’t you know life has its ups and downs ?……”

But that didn’t stop the moisture. Then I was trying to cheer myself up by reciting silently the famous poem by Pushkin: “If life cheated you/ Don’t worry, don’t be sad./Just believe—The bright future will surely come to you.”

But that didn’t help much.

A large drop of tear—the mark of the painful birth of my new life—welled up into my eyes and rolled down my cheeks.

There, in the darkness and silence in Daxian I had the most important turning point in my life.

What is a Good Leader ?

——Excerpts From a Dreamer’s Diary

January 13 Monday Fine

All the sudden, I am appointed to be the Party Secretary of the small town! It is too good to be true! Running on to the top of the hill in the town and looking down the vast, poor land and those old, low houses that have passed through many generations, I was feeling the excitement of carrying a sacred mission. Once you have power you have almost everything. But that's not the reason at all that I feel on the top of the world. Coming from the lowly, I know clearly what those common people are expecting and craving for. Now, I am the head of the town, I must do something special. I'm sure I know how to be a good leader.

January 14 Tuesday blue

I got up very early this morning and rode fast to that old office house. The first thing I want to do is to call a conference, discussing with other leaders and officers of the town government about how to get rid of bureaucracy and raise working efficiency. But, it was one hour and half after the appointed time before those "big heads" finally showed up. At the sight of their sipping tea leisurely as in a teahouse, I felt hot anger bubbling in me. Anyhow, since this is our first meeting, I made an effort to keep my cool. When I finished my long speech that has been suppressed and seeled in my heart for many years, I found the color on those faces was not as fine as that when they came into with cups of tea.

After lunch, I looked into several department of the town government and I was, though mentally prepared, still astonished to find so many official letters piled here and there with dust, so many urgent reposts and business affairs without being discussed and conducted. The terrible bureaucracy have caused many loses to our work. I at last lost my temper and shouted at those leaders of the departments, earning them that they would be dismissed if they go on working like this.

January 15 Wednesday Windy

Back from a commune where many pasents are still suffering hunger, my wife told me that there was much gossiping behind my back.

"They said you are too aggressive and pungent; you think too much of yourself; you never show respect to those old leaders who have a long revolutionary experience.....In a word, " my wife summed up, "they said you're not a good leader. "

January 16 Thursday Fog

We were "discussing"—actually, "arguing"—for a whole day about how to allot a newly-built develling house.

It is always said that being a leader or Party member, he must first concern the need, the weal and woe of people. I suggested that considering the fact that the living conditions of our government leaders are far more better than that of those common people—some of them are packed in one small room with three generations—we'd better let them move in first.

Unfortunately, only one of them saw eye to eye with me; two murmured a “yes” reluctantly; the rest were racking their brains to find “important” reasons to veto my “bill”. A big bald head said that his son is going to get married and he needs more rooms urgently; a greasy face is sure that his parents will come to live with his family ;a gray hair has the longest seniority in the town and he insists on enjoying better living conditions……

We were “discussing” from sunrise to sunset and each side held its ground. At last, I, the first leader in the town government, used my power—kicking the “democracy” out of the meeting room and putting my “imperious” foot down—

“This time, none of our leader will move into that house!”

January 17 Friday Cloudy

Back from a factory in which the management is terrible, I found my wife looked worried. She warned that there are increasing rumors about me.

“It is said that you forbade other leaders to move into that house out of ulterior motives—you want to build yourself a public image. They say you always abuse your power.” She paused and then complained, “Why don’t you try to cooperate well with other leaders and officers ? You must learn how to be a leader.”

January 18 Saturday Gloomy

“Could you find a good position in the town government for me ?” my uncle asked, “you have the power, you can manage, can’t you ? I’m really tired of working in that sad-looking factory. ”

I shook my head and said politely: “Uncle, I’m afraid I couldn’t use the power to do that. We should appoint people on their merits and abilities, not by favoritism and……”

“But you should admit the fact that many persons who are even poorer and less intelligent than me got good jobs or important positions only because they have powerful relatives.”

I found my voice became rather serious: “Yes, I admit it, but it is high time we put an end to that. I think being a good leader, he……”

My uncle suddenly stood up and strode out, banging the door behind him.

“Peng, peng, peng.” The door creaked open and my fat brother-in-law showed up.

“Congratulations! We’re feeling so proud of you!” he was smiling from ear to ear, “I never expected you would become the ‘president’ of the town……Do you still remember that wonderful dinner we shared three years ago ? You said you enjoyed very much that delicious food cooked by my wife……Yes, she is still in the poor countryside and hopes you transfer her to the town……”

Twenty minutes later, the door was banged closed again.

“Ring……” I picked up the phone, this time is my wife’s best friend.

“……My son failed to pass the exam, could you please help to……”

I put down the heavy receiver slowly and went to bolted the door.

January 19

Sunday

Rain

Back from a village school where children are studying in a dangerous run down temple, I saw, to my surprise, that my wife was sitting there weeping without cooking supper.

“I haven’t seen any leader like you!” she burst out, “All the relatives and friends are offended by you! How can I meet them or ask for their help henceforward ? Don’t you know blood is thicker than water ?! What an honest and foolish leader you are!”

January 20

Monday

Snow

This morning, I happened to see a thin and pale-faced woman at the gate before the office house, entreating the entrance guard to let her in. There was something in her voice and on her face that impressed me deeply. I went up to ask her. Suddenly she seized me by my arm when she got to know who I am.

“Secretary Tan, for a particular purpose, I’ve walked thirty miles to come to you. They all say you are a good leader, an upright man. I beg you to help me, help my poor daughter……” The woman snapped out with tears in eyes.

Soon, I learned her wrong—her daughter, twenty years old, was raped a year ago by a young man, who is still going scot-free and threatening the girl and her family.

How could this be possible ? Anyhow, one hour later, the woman’s story was proved to be true, and I also got to know the criminal is the son of the Party Secretary of our country.

No wonder!

Immediately I called a conference to discuss the matter.

I questioned the chief officer of the town court and the police station why they didn’t arrest the criminal. Without a little bit of fidgets and shame, they made up some ridiculous excuses for that and implied they got something from the county leaders.

Impatient and angry, I ordered them to take actions according to the law.

However, some leaders gave me a hint—not involving in this delicate matter; some said in a round-about way that it didn’t matter if I offered them but it would be a different story if I touched my direct superior; others suggested I’d better first go to consult this matter with the father of the young man……

Seeing that greasy-faced chief officer of the court was still sitting there, sipping the tea and putting smoke like enjoying a chat in a teahouse, I felt my blood was boiling.

“We must always remember that our power is given by people, who are expecting us to use the power to protect them, to help them to live a happy life, not to suppress them, not to safeguard the privileges of those leaders.” I suddenly held my tongue and then gritted my teeth:

“That young man must be arrested this afternoon!”

January 21 Tuesday Freezing

Back from the mountains where all the trees have been cut down, I found my wife's face was as black as thunder. I didn't ask why, and I've got used, since I got the position, to her retellings of those rumours, curses and her complaints.

I was too tired this evening to follow her daily lecture; my mind was still occupied by those barren land and bald mountains. Only a few words got into my ear.

“……said……obstinate……haughty……too……the son……foolish……will be……your leader……”

January 22 Wednesday

All the sudden, I am dismissed from my position! Now, I, after being a Party secretary of the town for eight days, became nobody again. Only when I am out of that old and ugly office house do I get to know that while I was busy working, some persons in the town government were busying themselves to write libelous and complaining letters. Each day in that eight, there were, on the average, five such kind of letters flying to the country government, condemning me of abusing power, having dirty ambitious, and the like. The letters, though having various “plots”, shared a same theme—I am not a good leader at all. The country leaders soon realized the error they'd made—appointing me to be the Party secretary of the town, and they are never shy and dilatory in correcting these kind of errors. Thus, I've finished my political career of eight days.

I contort myself by thinking that I've lost nothing because I haven't obtained anything. However, standing on the top of the hill and looking down the vast, poor land and those old, low houses that have passed for many generations, I felt puzzled:

What is a good leader?

1986年在重庆大学的作文，美籍教师 LORRY 给我的评分是“A”；评语是：
Tiger, I like your method of arguing in this essay. It's very clever and it certainly makes a point. I like it very much. The “diary style” is very convincing. I'd like to see what you could do with a more formal style. SEE ME during 4th period some day this week.

I like your title.

I enjoyed this. The diary-style was very effective.