

## **editor's note:**

On April 1st, 2022, the Puxi half of Shanghai was put under static management. Initially residents were told this would last only 4 days. The other half of Shanghai, Pudong, had just finished their 4 days of “static management” but were not released from their homes.

Traffic stopped. Locks were put on the gates and front doors of every apartment complex, residential community, and living compound. No one was to leave for any reason. There were no exceptions.

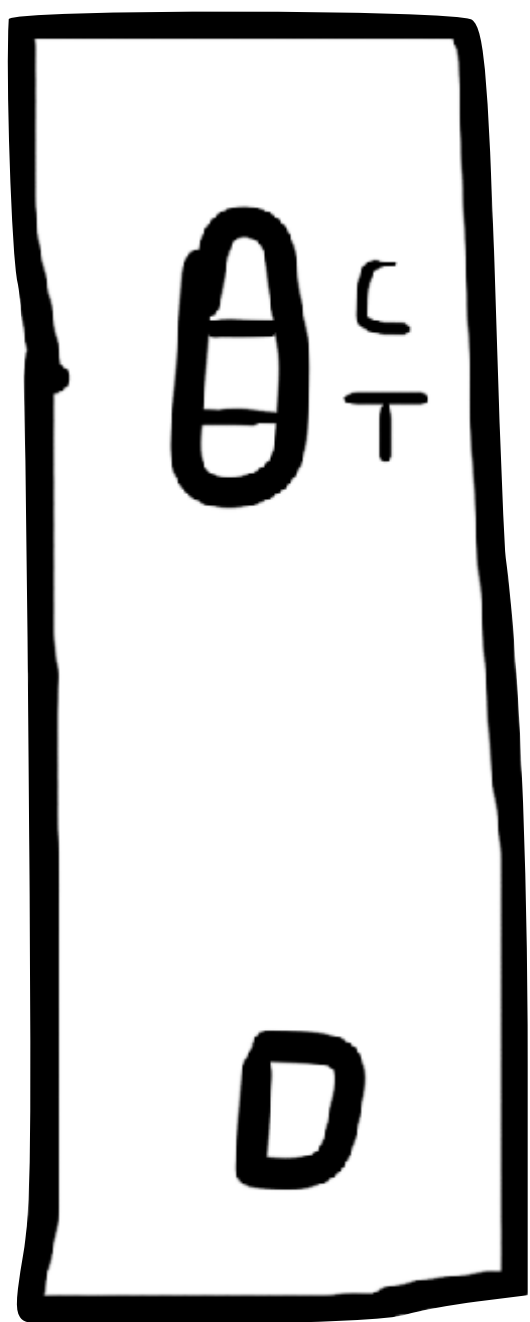
Men and women in full white hazmat suits were brought in from different districts and cities to live in doorways, alleyways, and lobbies of these residential areas to enforce “static management” and periodically line all residents up for PCR testing.

Best case scenario, someone was locked down on April 1st and released with most of the city on June 1st. For my community, lockdown started April 1st and ended June 12th. For many of the Pudong communities, lockdown started one or two weeks before April 1st. Everyone's full story is different, but from April 1st to June 1st everyone's is much the same.

Residents who were found to have the virus were forcibly removed from their homes and taken to fangcangs (方舱), hastily constructed makeshift hospitals, where they stayed under 24-hour fluorescent lights surrounded by thousands of other patients. Infected individuals remained in a fangcang until they tested negative enough times in a row to be sent home. There were no exceptions.

This issue of miniMAG is to commemorate just how far things can go, the banality of evil, and the lives lost due to lack of access to emergency care, food, and medicine during this crisis.

That the madness so casually inflicted upon us is never forgotten...



## 一場滬雨一場寒

Tim Yiu

你與寒

只是隔了一季雨

你與雨

只是隔了一幢牆

一縫窗 一縷故鄉

一場滬雨一場寒

你與生

卻是隔了一個陰

你與死哪

是隔了一個陽

一隻豬一頭羊

一場滬雨一場寒

2022.4.13

# April 21st,

Alex Prestia

The night is balmy. Candlelight. Whenever I want to write now it overwhelms. The thought of a beginning, middle, and end are too much. Too many things to put together. I listen out of the window with half my ear. I want to hear the sounds of something larger; I hear the sounds of maybe a cat yowling. Timidly. Shouldn't something larger be coming? Shouldn't they be boiling inside?

It's always too quiet now. It's always the calm before something bigger. It's never the bigger thing. It's four more days added onto four more days added onto fourteen more days until I've lost track. Until I wish I had lost track- a knock at the door reminds me it's time to walk back outside, line up, decide who will be ripped from the only thing they have left: a rented apartment. I know exactly how long I've been here.

Thinking about there again, sometimes I've dreamed of being there: where the infected are hauled off to. Lights on 24/7, a thousand beds in an old convention hall. Diseased human cattle. Back to the original thought I was trying to express, not the candlelight one, the overwhelmingness of calamity. Don't expect me to write a cohesive story.

Don't expect me to write a cohesive story. A beginning. A middle. An end. A end. Don't correct me; not now. A beginning- when they didn't warn us. When they put a man in jail for 14 days for rumormongering. The rumor: we may be forcibly locked into our homes. He was deserving of whatever reeducation he earned.

It began the next week, when we were actually locked down. Not exactly a beginning, they told us it would be 4-days. "Oh, but most heroes don't know the call to adventure is coming." Fuck you.

The end- that's not been announced either. As you have already guessed, it did not occur 4 days after the initial lockdown. I'm on day

21. Week 3. The end has not been announced. I suppose it could end any day, any time, this might not be the middle, it might be the end, it may still be the beginning.

I was too positive- believe me, I'm trying to stay negative, it comes quite naturally- that would atleast end the waiting at home portion; I could be a little white ghost in that camp, wander around and moan and generally scare everyone away from me.

It would be my mere Prescence, they'd feel my aura prior to seeing my pallid countenance- there are no showers in the newer, less polished camps. I may be shipped to a covid camp, but even then, it may only be a part of the rising action, the interminable middle.

After covid camp there's no guarantee the city would have changed. How depressing! Imagining getting into that crummy passenger van, failing to succumb to NO. 1 most important, deadly virus, and riding through the city streets.

I wonder how the streets look today, the old proof that China had graduated an awkward middle school phase, the proof that they were doing quite well in high school: Starbucks at every corner, tesla's galore, and even some homegrown models.

How I long to see an asshole driving a Tesla right now, but getting into that van, having survived  $14 + 4 + x + y + 7$  days of camp and riding through empty streets. Not seeing a soul walking around as I get ever closer to my community, ever closer to the tired sight of my old bed, to the aiyi continually racketing pans onto each other and calling it cooking (she has actually cooked for me and is a lovely woman, I digress) knowing that I'd still be stuck in that little room for days, weeks, months? More. That's not an ending though. I can't balance that with myself.

I can do middles. I can't do them in order, but I can do middles. I need to keep reminding myself of that. middle is just the rambling that takes place to kill time. I need to remind myself...

## 失眠的笨廚

Tim Yiu

廿歲的港和廿五歲的沪有何不同呢？

我記憶太好，不想回答。

當維港的一滴水落入黃浦江

天星小輪搖曳著蘇州河的黃昏

那一碗仔翅比翼辣肉麵條

蛋牛治炆了生煎的底

溫莎結依記得那一句、那一對

手

明明

港是廿五，沪是一百七十九

不對

儂看

佢地都係一百八十

八字都幾夾

食一個月堅果是否七日後的混沌

子非魚 子非我

羅非幾錢一斤？

帶魚呢

2022.4.22清晨

# Strangers

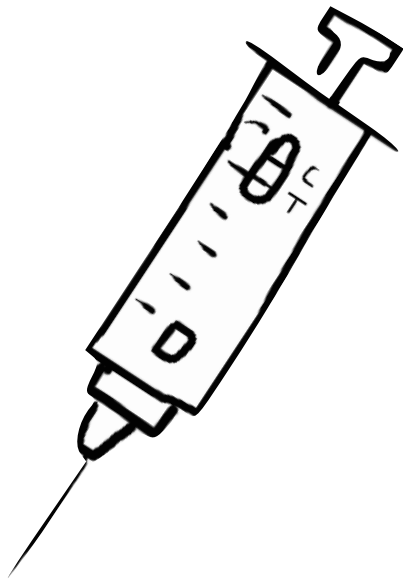
Akumbe G. N.

The light is blur  
The sun shines behind the moon  
Flowers are fading  
Rivers, getting dry  
Pond dried-off  
Stars getting lost in the sky  
Is it an eclipse?

From foundation to founder  
Merchants and governors  
The earth is missing  
Life seems displaced  
Value is lost  
Where is this taking us to?

Birds have gone on vacation  
The morning has become quiet  
Humans are awakened by the sound of their stomach  
Even death seems not to be the end of it all  
Apes have come again  
Where will we go?

Travelers are stocked in a strange land.  
They cannot find their way back and neither do they even feel like going back.  
Who really owns it all?  
You or them?  
They seem more comfortable than we are.



# Another Negative

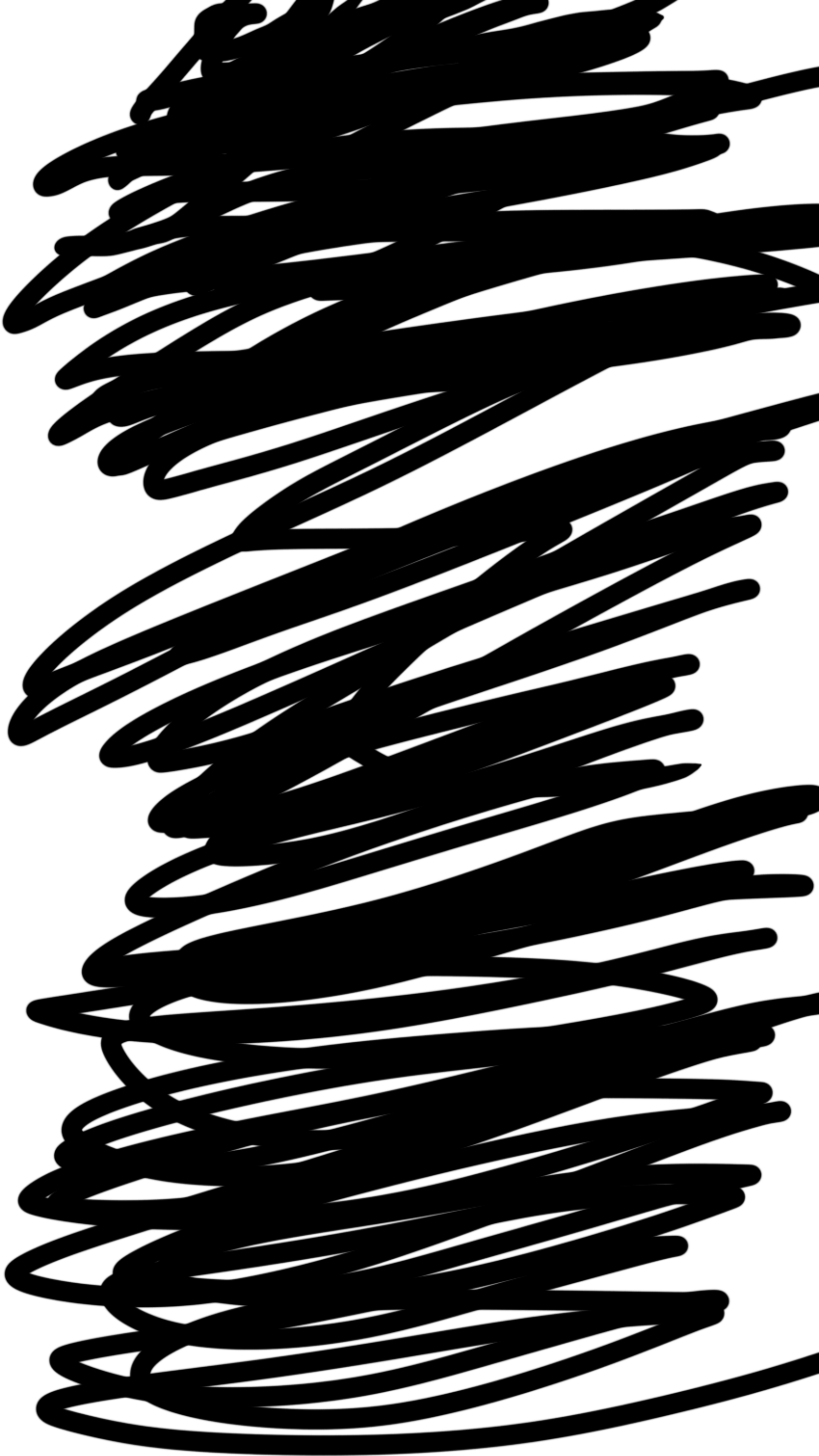
Alex Prestia

Spring to the window,  
wasted spring,  
just another grown man  
crying in the alley. Empty  
pots and pans  
rattle. Back to my kitchen  
antigen test under the sink.  
Repeat,  
sink.

2022.5.???







# May 1st,

Alex Prestia

In the morning I walk my girlfriend's Samoyed, a cross between an overstuffed pillow and a white wolf, through the narrow alleys of my compound. Upbeat, tail in the air, and trotting ahead she is excited, sniffing. She runs into the doorways of neighbor's apartments until called out by my trembling voice. She is not unhappy here. She can handle the monotony in a way that I find enviable. Scratching, running, sitting with her legs tucked out like a bunny rabbit. It would be much easier if I could submit to oppression, like this happy animal, now snuggling next to me on the couch; where I run my hands through her fur helping her to shed her winter undercoat. I am not a dog.

It's hard to believe it's been a full month. I haven't walked out onto the street in a month. Ridden in a car. Had a bite that wasn't cooked in my own home. Walked past a stranger. A month.

Beforehand, this seemed impossible. Impractical, at the least. And who would tank their own economy, their best city, in order to achieve something unreal? Now doomscrolling, doomscrolling, doomscrolling, through news that never changes and rumors that contradict each other. Hoping for release, checking flight tickets, and balancing.

Balancing upright, in a small room, on one foot, told that any fall will result in expulsion and never garnering a signal for when the session will end. Sometimes hearing through the grapevine of a grapevine that surely next week it will end, and mostly being smart enough to guard my hope from running off of such an impractical cliff, or putting that second foot down for even a moment.

My purpose in Shanghai was always to improve my writing. To spend five-years, tops, on my craft in a city where it was possible to meet other interesting minds and promote and grow, together. Work, networking, parties- all of this was here, but not the goal. Better

versions of all those things could be felt elsewhere. I wasn't confident enough to survive New York, yet. Besides, see how awkwardly my work still hangs.

Now I am stuck considering whether to retreat or stay. 10k isn't that much for plane ticket. But if I run while things are bad, I'll hate myself for being a coward.; if I stay and endure, I'll hate myself for being a masochist. Oh look, one-way tickets are only \$8,000 today.

Lockdown in 2022 has become a simple window into my future if I remain here. Stuck in a small apartment, with a woman who I desperately want to be away from, taking care of a creature that is by equal means adorable and boring. Unfulfilled. All in an increasingly totalitarian community that feels comfortable telling me which food I should or should not eat.

I'm so far way from any sense of Natural Law; I hear at least one new person screaming each night and I assume they also don't feel much of a kinship with Natural Law either. This is not the life I want. This is not my country. Every day in wechat group chats, Chinese complain about foreigners breaking the rules, tell us that we should respect the country we are in. I can't argue with the logic. At one point I would have said something pithy about having to adjust to become part of the larger world, that used to be something they wanted here, but I wasn't paying attention when the tide turned. Now I find myself in very deep and suddenly restless waters.

No longer can fitting in to the wider world be found in a poster, message, or policy. Not even the emptiest of words concede that other places have nice things too. So I shouldn't stay. They don't want me; I'm too rebellious. I don't want them; they're too rebellious. We're breaking up, but I'm hanging in the doorway. This majestic Samoyed smiles at me and I stay put.

# 仿俳

Tim Yiu

1

咽下指隙的精液  
在封城的上海  
未完未了

2

蜘蛛纏著  
兩個和弦  
一首歌

3

俟心臟停止  
你後覺  
被移除聯繫人

4

蹲下  
和房間里的大象  
擤鼻涕

5

每個人都是上了發條的鬧鐘  
床的余溫  
埋葬著我的交感神經

2022.5.13

# Behind You

Alex Prestia

There's that cackle again,  
hysterical,  
crashing out of you  
and swamping our studio, until I'm  
immersed, waist deep in  
the murk of a witch's laugh.

Gone again,  
I'm left with my thoughts,  
utterly alone, except for you  
in the bed behind me.  
The roar of the riot building  
building throughout the day,  
pots and pans being slammed on a rooftop,  
then the eerie stillness,  
silence  
of an unwillingly shared room.  
You behind me, lurking  
over the drab din,  
over the unhearty rioters.  
We've given up "rioting." Now  
we cower as the clock resets.

Days of suspension:  
no news, no murmur, no test  
today, silence  
and wondering if they will stand tall,  
or continue to cower,  
linger in group  
chats, and half-heartedly post  
how they really feel.  
Turns out none of us really feel  
so long as there's something behind us.

My heart's been bleeding  
on the cramped linoleum,  
she complains every day  
that I'm ripping out hers.  
There's no time for violence,  
I'd be remembered as  
the villainous sidekick.  
The last man who believed in China,  
that's a main character,  
that's a fallen hero.  
Red puddles on the floor are romantic.

Tiptoeing through my own home.  
If she knows I'm awake, I'll  
have to go out, and stand  
under the Sword of Damocles  
for another few days,  
my kingdom is a studio apartment,  
what else is there to lose

2022.5.3



**Styrofoam Xiaokou Fire**

Alex Prestia

I wonder why I'm still here  
I guess I want to see it all burn  
'a casual moth to the flame'  
I guess I want to see it all burn

2022.5.27

# 世事

蟲兒飛的上海初步解封了，冥冥中應驗了我多年前的歌詞：

So close your eyes,  
just wait till summertime.

有人（解封公告評論欄首條）說這是六一禮物，除非你詐傻扮懵，除非你是巨嬰，解封不是禮物。最新一期《經濟學人》談到當下中國語言的淪喪、年輕人以淺薄的情感代替思考。

也許，不要忘記這兩個月你經歷的一切，正如卅三年前他們所承受的。亦不要回避當下的一切；苦候的長龍、混亂的指示、蹉跎的接種率、阻滯的復工，朋友道：「上海不留我了呀。」

「以 3 口之家計算，每月需承擔最少 8 次核酸即 3人 \* 16元 \* 8 次 = 384 元費用，一年就是 4608 元。」

"today i woke up at 4am to do test and it took 1 and half hour to be home again"

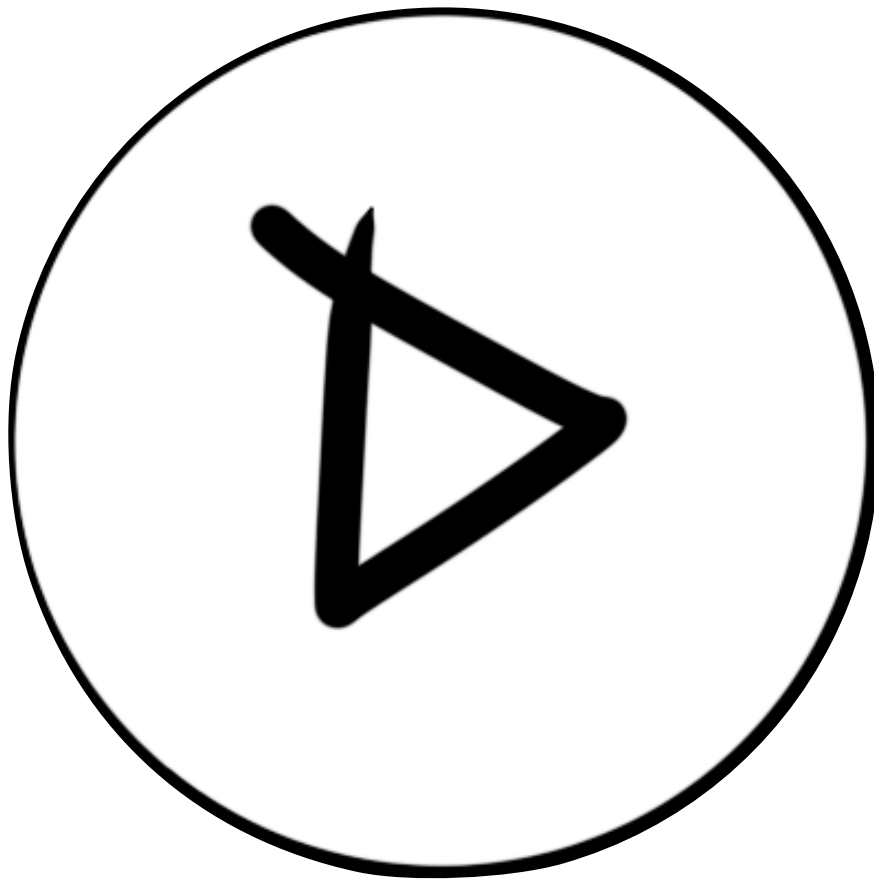
廿年前，大世界內尚佇立著中國第一台西洋鏡（一種遊戲器具，竊以為其應譯為 Xi Yang Jing，且以滬語發音），劉天賜在《犀牛俱樂部》里有一句 bittersweet 的 punchline：西洋鏡好似世事一樣，睇咗千祈唔好拆穿佢。

Tim Yiu

2022.6.1 凌晨, 6.2

initially posted on (then censored and deleted from) WeChat微信





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“一場滄雨一場寒”，“失眠的笨廚”，“仿俳”，and “世事”

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“Stranger”

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New Book: *Nwa’nwi (Child of God)*

Available at Amazon

<https://tinyurl.com/5dhfx2dn>

edited, “Diary: April 21st”, “Another Negative”, “Diary: May 1st”,

“Behind You”, “Styrofoam Xiaokou Fire”, and lines

by Alex Prestia