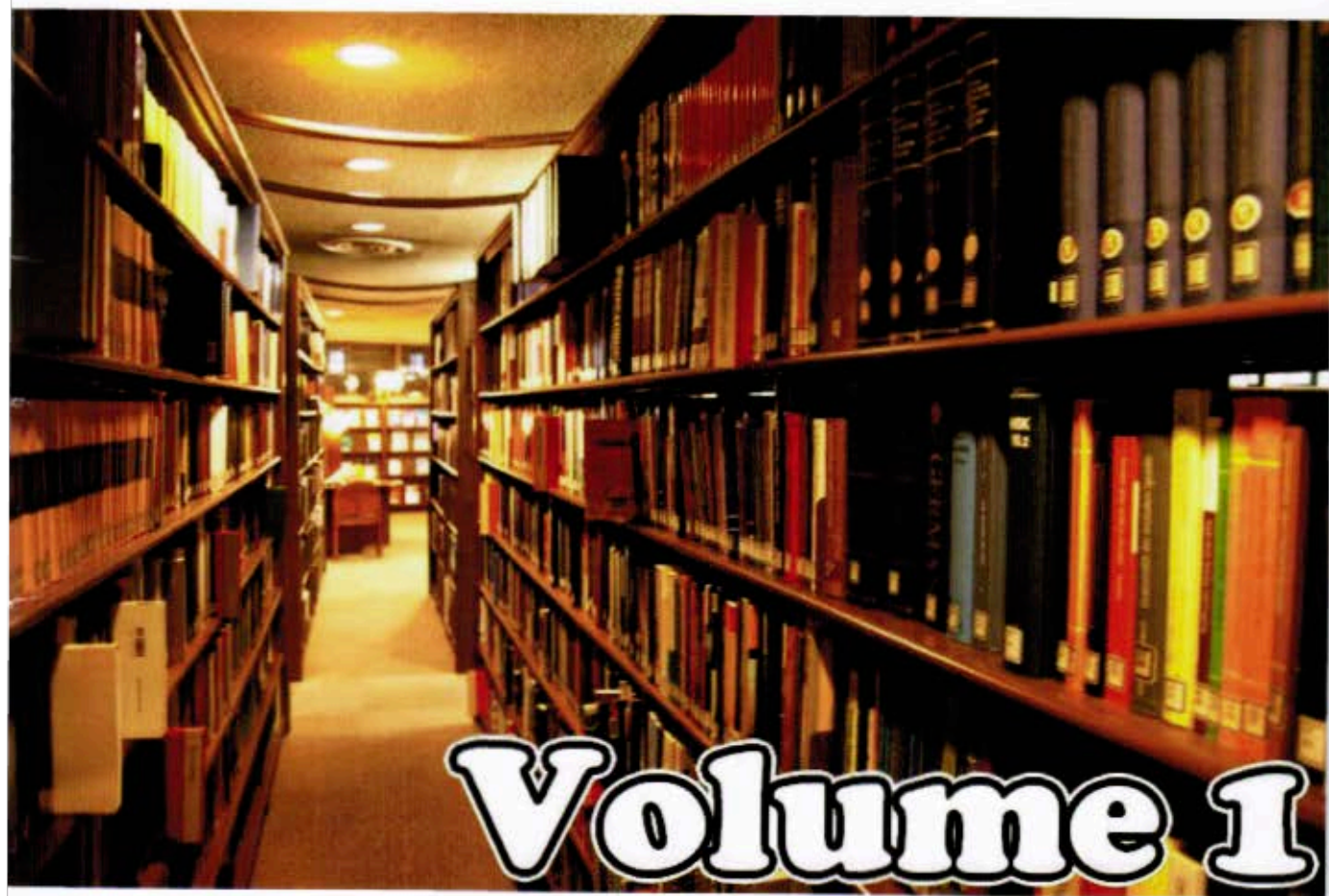


CROP



Volume 1

Creativity Rising
Original Production

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The First CROP

Michael Pronko

Are students in Japan creative? Can they use English to express impressive images? Can they think in stories? Can they escape from the clutches of grammar testing and picky details? Can they communicate in passionate ways? Can they use another language to say what is meaningful and true for them? Can they make English come alive?

These are the questions that bounced around in my head when I started to mull over the idea of this journal. I had to convince the teachers in the English department, and convince myself, too, that this was possible to even ask these questions. I applied for some funding. I put out some information. I waited and waited for the answers. I am happy to report that those questions, and my own worries over them, have been answered. The answer is this first volume of CROP.

It is hard to know the answers to many questions in life, and the questions above are not small questions. They affect the future of students and of Japan and of the world. It is even harder to find the answers when all around us, simple, formulaic answers are dished out to people all the time. Yet, once people look for more meaningful answers, they can start to express themselves in poetry, essays, stories and dramas. Literary and creative writing never offers easy answers, but tends to raise as many questions as it offers solutions.

Having too many questions can be a bit frightening. To answer questions can be confusing. Everyone wants clear, certain answers. They want 'right' answers. However, like farming a crop, unpredictable events can happen, so you never know what will happen to your crop. This first crop came out well because all the writers and editors were brave enough to connect language to life. Now, the results of their courage can be read. CROP is ready to share and enjoy.

To submit writing takes a lot of guts. Exposing your English, your feelings, your creative desire so openly is a risky thing to do. But, I hope next year more and more students will be confident and strong to take time to write and submit their writing to CROP. That's not easy to do, but the best things in life are never easy. The most valuable parts of life take time, effort, and courage. In the long run, though, those hard-to-try things become the building blocks of a more meaningful life.

To be honest, I was surprised to find out students know how to write in such creative ways. Japanese schools do not really have classes that focus on creativity, much less how to write in creative ways. Somehow, these students knew! The power and energy of their writing comes from their making language new and original, letting their Creativity Rise and taking time and effort to Produce Originality. They drew less on their schooling and more on their basic humanity. Maybe one day, creativity will be considered just a normal and basic part of life.

CROP is also about community. A journal helps to create a shared bond between writers and readers, editors and advisors, students and teachers, the department and the university, and indeed, between anyone who picks it up and takes a look! Of course, community is what universities are all about! And so, CROP is not 'outside' the university, but rather it is an excellent example of the important values that we share 'inside' the university.

That shared sense of community is one of the best parts of writing. It is part of why writing has been such a crucial component of human expression for all recorded history. A journal like CROP not only reflects our common humanity; it helps to renew it and reinforce it. I hope that next year's CROP will have even more students' submitting work and helping to edit, produce and run the journal. The community can stretch wide enough to fit everyone.

The future history of humanity will depend more and more on writing, creating, and reading. It will also depend on better ways of thinking and feeling. Creative writing helps to chart those new and better ways. Many of the world's best ideas, the most constructive, positive and meaningful ones, together with the feelings behind them, were first published in journals.

I do not think CROP will cause a world revolution, but I hope it will cause many small, individual revolutions. Reading these works can help change how people think and feel. That is an important thing. It also can help find better ways to learn and use English. I hope that CROP will have that powerful effect on everyone who reads it. It certainly had that effect on me!

Michael Pronko
CROP Advisor

The First CROP

Hikaru Machigashira

When I was a second-year student, Dr. Paul Hullah announced about new production in English Literature in reading class. He called it "MGU journal." He said this production would make a booklet with student writings. I was so interested in publishing, so I said I would join the production.

When I became a third-year student, the first meeting was held. Three students that were my friends also joined and five fourth-year students joined in the production. The production started only from this year, so we had to talk with the members about so many things. For example, we must make the name, schedules, and think of the scale and other details. So, we held meetings again and again. Gradually, we decided such things.

At third or four meeting, we decided the journal's name. The name is CROP. I made the name in the bathroom in my house! This name includes many meanings. So, I will write about the name. To live in the world, and grow, we must eat. Crops are the essence of our eating. I hope the journal will have such value about raising creativity, writing, and English skill. CROP includes our hope for this. This is the first reason why I chose the word.

Second, I thought the name of the journal should be simple. A simple name is easy to memorize. For example, many world brand names (like Gucci, CHANEL, or COACH) have strong impact and are very simple. So I thought of a simple word. I thought about such words again and again. When I was in the bathroom, one word hit my mind. The word was "CROP." I can't remember why the word came out in my mind. However, this word attracted me.

At the same time, I looked at the alphabetical letters. I wanted to include meanings into the letters because it would make clear the journal's significance of existence. So, I thought about C, first. I decided C stands for "Creativity," because the production would be made by students' creativity. Second, I made the R's meaning. It is "Rising." For I hope the members and the writers grow up through the production. Third, I made the meanings to the O. O means "Original." We expect the original writings. P is, of course, "production." So, CROP means "Creativity Rising Original Production."

Don't you think the sound of "CROP" is pretty? I hope you think so.

After deciding such things, we started to advertise about CROP. In May, the first work was submitted. We were so excited. Gradually, works written by Meigaku students increased. So, we thought this production progressed smoothly.

However, CROP was only established this year, so there was confusion in the production. We remade schedules again and again. As a result, we gave all writers, and ourselves, troubles. To be honest, our management is not good, so we probably annoyed many writers. We are so sorry about the condition. Next year, we will make a new and better style for CROP and for writers.

However, all the works by students are so good, so we had a lot of fun and read deeply. And we think the production is good because of these great works. We thank all the writers very much. They submit many types of writings, essay, poem, drama, short story and others. We are so glad to read these many writings.

Anyway, I want to write thanks again. We are very glad to read the writings by students with "Creativity Rising Originality." We are very excited. If nothing was submitted in CROP, this production couldn't start. So, we thank writers for submitting their works.

The works can be read on the CROP website and in the printed booklet. So good writings can blossom in two places and finally, we hope they bloom in many readers' hearts. We are looking forward to having them read by many people. To achieve this goal, we made effort to this production. Through the production, we realize Meigaku students have a creative spirit. All works have originality, deep imagination and the skill of analyzing something important. We are happy to know students' talent.

CROP will continue in the next year. Through reflection and experience this year, we will make CROP an even better production. We think we can do this because Meigaku students have the energy of creativity. In the next year, we will raise another nice "CROP." So, please write and submit the works if you have the energy of creativity. We expect we can read great works again next year.

Finally, Thank you! CROP members, Dr. Pronko, Dr. Hullah, all the writers and all the readers!

Please have fun!!

Hikaru Machigashira
Editor

Essays

"Little Workers in Sweatshop"

Saori Suto

Born in a wealthy country is a great privilege because we can live in happiness. However, it is may be too good for us because that is why we sometimes forget how lucky we are, living without any worries and forgetting about people who live in poverty. I did not have any idea that people who are my age, or younger are treated so badly and live in unthinkable and painful lives.

While I was studying in Canada, I took a Native Studies class and learned about "sweatshops." A sweatshop is a place where workers are subjected to harsh exploitations which include absences of living wage or benefit, poor working conditions, and discipline such as verbal and physical abuses. In addition, many sweatshop workers are forced to work, and most of the time, they only make a small amount of money a day. Unfortunately, many are frequently facing dangers like working in cruel temperatures, using dangerous tools, toxic chemicals, and carrying heavy loads.

Despite the unfair circumstances, these children still have to work for their living. Consequently, young workers do not time to play with friends or spend peaceful moment with their family. Instead, they have to go to sweatshops to make money. Moreover most child workers never learn how to read, or write. This fact is just what I learned in my Native Studies classes. Meanwhile, there is a lot of other real unfairness out there in this world.

How am I so different from sweatshop workers? I just happened to be born in a wealthy country and that is it. If I had been born in the same country like them, I could have been one of these children. When I found out about these facts, I was deeply shocked and felt very guilty for how I have been. I want to do something to help for the little workers working in these slaves-like working conditions.

From now on, I want every consumer to be aware that they may be buying and wearing merchandise that was made by young, starving laborers half way across the world. I don't think it is easy to make a big difference in this matter, but I believe that small actions could also lead to a larger change. I seriously think people need to know more about sweatshops and the companies which hire these pitiful laborers because the awareness could be the first step of change for these poor children.

Thus, the important thing is that there are innocent children who are suffering right

this moment, and are not being treated right although they try hard. They cannot even get educated. Since I have studied about the sweatshop, I cannot just live the life I have had. Finally, I have found what I really want to do in my life, and have realized that I would love to work for United Nations so that I could take actions and make differences in these little workers' lives.

"From reaction for JURASSIC PARK"

Nobumitsu Nakagami

Yumiko Hashimoto

Image and sound have unfolded different (but good!) world. Especially sound is great which we can't taste in our daily life. We are studying English through music. In the class, I have understood sound make us feel various emotion. I have new interest through this story again. "What is sound?"

Sounds surround me everywhere I go. From the sound of laughter when I'm sorrowful to spending boring time. There are many different laughs. These laughs give me wonderful power whenever I hear them. In reverse, there are sounds that make me frown and sad. So sounds have various effects. I will introduce an example to you.

First, I will look at (sounds that make me smile). Listening to wave takes me to another world. That sound calms me when I get annoyed with something. I think that natural sound has mysterious power and gives it to us. It washes the dirty part of my mind with wonderful power.

Though I love natural sounds, other sounds make me smile. For instance, the sound of fire burning food in the pan is relaxing and makes me hungry. Similarly, the water of a river make me thirsty. When I am hungry and thirsty, I am glad about hearing this sound because I can eat and drink them soon. Even when I am not hungry, those sounds make me comfortable.

Now, I shall look at sounds which make me frown. I am waked up by the alarm clock every day. I dislike this sound very much. Because this sound makes me uncomfortable. Especially, in the morning it is hard. This sound shakes and hits my head.

Finally, in the mountain, wind is sound that makes me feel at ease. I can feel nature by wind and breeze because I can't feel nature where there are many people. We casually hear the sound of wind every day. However, in the mountain, we can hear sound that we have not ever heard. This thing is wonderful!!

There are many things we don't know in the world. However it is not important what those are. The important thing is that those advance our mind of investigation and imagination.

These great people tell me about power which humans have in the brain, so we should notice people who make new world such as them. Then we will be able to know “we are not existence which tastes only one world, but we have power to make another world.

"Food Culture from New York"

Natsumi Kasahara

What is the best food culture? I was reminded of this question through my first trip to go abroad. In the fourth summer vacation on my campus life, I traveled to New York on a seminar trip. When I discovered something with the smell of New York, I was stirred by even very usual things in foreign culture. A food culture was one of the most impressive things in this tour. I met many great meals-café; in downtown or museum, restaurant with gospel or jazz, and foods that were pizza or hamburger or cheese cake in New York. All of meals were very fine for me, and I could find a fresh discovery as culture shock.

The smaller a café is, the more impressive visitors feel a food culture. I was surprised by the large number of cafés there, and I was impressed by their unique features that they have their characteristic decorating. In a Mexican meals house, there had an intimate mood with long wooden chairs and tables and orange light. On the other, in a western-style café, there were wild and dignified with big modern paintings and a wall hanging with bullhorns. A café in New York makes visitors feel like a small other world because they are decorated for expressing a color of that café.

These fine cafés in New York reminds us of a mood of Japanese café which is usually a chain store like Mc Donald or Doutor which has a similar common furniture; many chairs seems to be made by mass-production, a white wall with advertisement about new products. I cannot feel a fine atmosphere in Japanese ordinary café, because it seems sharp for me to feel the time of the life while eating something. Although the style of Japanese café lets people notice a consumer culture that has supported the culture of an economic power, it will be the fact that people cannot get some new impressions from too commercial decorations.

Although I enjoyed a decoration in meals, it was hard for me to become used to the taste of foods in New York. All of the foods have a dynamic taste for me who have lived in Japan for 22 years. Foods in New York, which are a pizza, a beef stroganoff, a tart, and a cake, were so delicious in the first nibble, but they started to say themselves, as assertions after about the third nibble. Every food has a great characteristic like a direct message such as Sweets say that it is sweet in a loud voice. Their message was hard and too direct for me at first, but I became to get used to them. It will be one of travel relishes that a visitor gets a sense of a life culture through an experience including direct cultural shock.

On the other hand, it was the fact that Japanese members in this trip missed the taste of Japanese foods. Our dear Japanese foods were traditional and healthy. To compare with American taste, Japanese foods tend to have a plain taste. It might be

affected by Japanese culture, Wabi, Sabi which is a spirit to recognize that it is beautiful to hide a characteristic from visitors. Although Japanese foods do not have a strong impact with a first nibble, they have a consideration for health of visitors for a long time. It is also a relish while traveling that we could see a good point of our homeland comparing with other country's point.

I was also interested in the service. In there, waiters and visitors greet each other as usual, because I could not often hear it in café in Japan. I felt shy at first, and at last I realized it was very snug in communication. I would like to talk with waiters friendly like our professor who had a good conversation every time in this trip. One day I saw that our professor and a waitress had a conversation not only about a greeting and an order but also about their homeland and a purpose of our travel with witty joking. In New York, people could feel humans closely, so they will become to be happy because of getting a frank distance naturally.

Japanese common service is recognized that it is usual to make a fixed distance between a clerk and a customer; a mechanical greeting from only clerks, an order without communicating (recently, some shops have introduced a machine to order foods from customers to kitchen directly), and no expression for service from customers. All Japanese service does not innovate such a type of communication, however it is clear that Japanese service did not have more amicable relations than American one. Although people do not need to mind some dangers in U.S.A.; a pickpocket, an act of terrorism, and a gun culture, the line between flank communication and avoidance of danger is as thin as a knife's edge.

It will be a common world understanding that people would like to enjoy their meals. Everyone can get happiness by having a fine time eating; to have an interesting mood, to eat a delicious food, and to have a good chat. I am pleased to have such happy meals through this trip in New York. Perhaps it will be a dream for Japanese to have a break in café like in New York, because such a café has a possibility to become people's favorite shop. If people can get a good relation with a flank distance, they will have more wonderful meal in second time. By enjoying meals of other country, you can meet many kinds of culture shock, which make you think about what the best food is.

"TIME TRAVEL"

Natsuho Kitaya

This is my true story:

Last night, I traveled in time.

Actually, it is not time travel exactly, but I felt like it was.

I came back from my part-time job, and spent more than two hours in front of my PC.

Then I got tired, so I went to bed about 3 o'clock a.m.

Suddenly I heard my friend's voice.

She said, "You seem to have lost a lot of weight!"

I opened my eyes. I noticed I was lying on my back, and I felt a sign of my friend on both sides of me. On my left side, my friend said about my weight.

They are sitting maybe, but I found certainly they were not lying on their backs like me.

It was a dim vision and I could not move my eyes in their direction.

I was rooted to the ground, but I could see the vision.

I knew the place where I was, I was there the day before yesterday.

It was your house! We had a party in your house on the 27th of June.

I jumped in time. My memory after the 27th of June was gone, and I had even forgotten that I went to bed after working on the PC.

My brain thinks I'm in your house now, today is the 27th of June. No doubt.

The friend on the left was one of the seminar members, but on the right side, there was my ex-friend. So, I thought 'Why did she come here?' and I started to think this is not a real moment. It was so weird.

She was my high school classmate, but we fought, then I renounced her.

After "The left friend" speech, my ex-friend talked about me soooooo badly.

But I could not say anything. I could not even move.

Suddenly, she put something, something fluffy like a pillow on my face.

She was trying to kill me.

I thought this is real, I feel I'm there in the present time.

But I remembered some hours ago at a stretch. I came back from my job, worked on the PC, and then I went to bed. So, I realized this is not real!
She is still trying to kill me, I was so scared and it was hard to breathe.

I tried to make my consciousness clearly, prayed strongly and hardly.
My mouth was moving but my voice did not come out.
I prayed "I need to come back to the real world, please, please, please....."
I know this is dream, just a dream, I will never die, never die, never die....."

Finally, I blew one big breath.
Then everything blew away from me.

I could see my bedroom's ceiling. I returned safely to the real world.
This experience scared me so much.
I thought I would die and I took labored breathing.

Believe it or not, it is your choice, but I think this was not a normal dream. Because I could feel it and it was really hard breathing.

I don't know why the high school friend appeared in my image.
I did not recollect her for many years, so her appearance was very surprising to me.
But actually she appeared in my head, so I think I perhaps imagined her in my head somehow or she was thinking about me and imagined me.
Her feeling reached in my head. It is a kind of spiritual thinking but perhaps that's true or my bedroom was stuffy and I felt uncomfortable and hard to breathe, then my conscious connected pain and the pain connected to her image.

Anyway I think she is evil for me. Maybe I am evil for her too.
I have not seen her strange image since that time.

From this experience, I felt time travel is hard and it needs lot of energy.
If I could choose a moment to time travel, it is maybe nice, but I cannot choose any moment. So, time travel is very tough thing for me.

I don't want to time travel again.

"Hopper Moment"

Megumi Arai

I think that the paintings of Edward Hopper are full of the melancholy feeling.

For example, especially my favorite painting, "Nighthawks" (1942) is very impressive. This painting expresses his touch to us very well. We can see three customers and one clerk in the diner which is open at midnight. It is difficult to read the expressions of these people with a simple touch. However, with the representation of silence and no one in the street, melancholy and solitude fill the painting.

Then, I think "Gas" (1940) parallels "Nighthawks."

First, these two paintings both have three objects; "Gas" has three petrol pumps, "Nighthawks" has three people. These three objects are not lively in the light. The places vibrant with life normally exaggerate the feeling.

Hopper expresses perspective by the shade of light in both these paintings. This is a very dramatic representation. Edward Hopper expressed melancholy through ordinary situations.

Poems and Lyrics

“and the lights will never go out”

Kazuhito Kaneta

So I open my eyes
to the voice in my head
“welcome to just another yesterday”

Been dumb, lost, and not found
Everything I see turned dull and grey
Will I ever kiss my past goodbye?
Or will I live like this until I die?

But you saved me from this dark
and I'm not afraid, not afraid anymore
feels like 21 and invincible
and I know everything's gonna be alright

your voice, the sweetest of the sound
Singing me to sleep, only to keep me awake
Wide-wake, still I dream a dream of you

Your hair catches me like a web of the spider
And I'm caught so happy
For you are the air I breathe
When you are gone, I'll be gone too

We can fly to the place
Where no one can find us
We will lie on the White Sandy Beach
We will be the wind and caress each other
We will be soaked by the rain
We will hang ourselves on the rainbow to dry

And the sunset colour flaming red
Is as bright as my love for you

"A Letter"

Aya Sugiyama

Hi. Long time no see. How are you doing? I'm very fine now. This place have not changed since we watched stars: calm, quiet, clear air and beautiful. This is good for seeing beautiful skies. From time to time, I watch a large number of twinkling stars. I feel better when I see it.

I remembered you with the memory of watching the stars. Do you remember that? That is the precious memory for me. I can't forget your talking under the stars. When we are watching stars, you suddenly said, "It is said that people become a star when they die. They lead people who they loved in the living by their own lightness. If it is true, the shooting stars could not make our dreams come true. I wonder if they might be only thinking about being born again. They cannot afford to worry about other people's wish. That is only natural. That is right. That is good for us..." I didn't figure out what you were saying, why you said that, what you meant.

But now, I found out my own answer. You meant, "Your wish has to come true by your own effort. Don't count on others. They are just doing something for their wish. Nobody has inner reserves of strength which others thought he or she has." At that time, I too counted on you because of your kindness. I guess I became your burden. I always asked you many kinds of thing such as what should I do and how. And you always answered them and helped what I should do so that you answered. I'm so sorry that I didn't realize your help and now I want to say you, "Thank you so much. You never gave up on me." No. I cannot express the word "Thank you" because my feeling is bigger than what the words mean.

I have no ideas how to answer your kindness. You might say "Easier said than done." I know you love this phrase and you always care whether you do it or not. You proved it to me by helping me, didn't you? So I have to start walking on my own for realizing that truth. This letter is the first step of my decision. I will make this letter my truth. I would like you to say to me "You are my pride." I would like to be the one who you loved as an equal. I have to grow up to be an adult.

Here is the best place: clean and clear. It seems the air cleans not only my body but also my inner side. I would like to say so many times, "Thank you." But I don't want these words to be easier said than done. So I do my best here.

Take care. Don't catch a cold. (You may say that that is only my words)

Love

To my precious

From your...

Poems

Aya Sugiyama

"Reflecting"

"Who are you?"
"Who are you?"
The golden mirror
Sits in black velvet
Spilling tiny diamonds
And asks
"Who are you?"
"Who are you?"

"Hanabi"

We see the dream
Fleeting dream
On the summer night
No time to say "good-by"
It looks like beauty

"Meeting"

By accident
Any chance
Meeting is precious
Make a smile
I'm sure
I love my friends

"Seeking"

Round, round, round
Again and again
When can we stop
Seeking the meaning
We are still living
Round, round, round
Again and again

Short Stories

"The Day that Changed Mike's Life" **(No. 1 out of 6 stories)**

Yuki Nakazawa, Natsumi Watanabe, Hitomi Fujikake, Yuki Yoshimura

Mike worked each day in a store, watching the days pass and hating his job. One day, in came a tall stranger who looked at Mike and said "You are my long-lost son. Come with me to a new life". With wonder and surprise, Mike followed his parent out the door.

His parent was called Tyler and took him to his house, with beautiful, brightly coloured flowers blooming in the yard. They sat and drank tea together, looking out over the garden. They were beginning to rebuild a bond that neither had felt for a long time.

They lived together from that day on. They ate together, worked in the garden together and shopped together. One day, about a month later, when running errands Mike noticed his parent buying a pink razor. He asked why.

"Well, son, it's better for me. Shavers irritate my skin."

It was a hot summer day. They decided to go to the pool. They chose separate rooms for changing and, when Tyler came out, he was wearing a two-piece bathing suit.

"What are you wearing - is this some kind of joke?" cried Mike.

"Why son", said Tyler, "didn't you know I was your mother?"

"A man from the Universe" (No. 2 out of 6 stories)

Haruka Fukuda, Mai Tagawa, Satomi Matsumoto, Maako Takamoto

Mike works in a bookstore in Saitama. He is twenty-eight years old and single. He hates his job because he often cuts his finger on the edges of book pages. The blood drops onto the floor and lies there like a jewel.

One day, he is cleaning his shop. A man enters and says "You have to go home. Come with me."

Mike is startled at first, but then realizes that the man is his long-lost father. He does not understand how he knows this, but is certain. He follows his father unquestioningly, hope growing in his heart.

In the next moment, they are in space. Mike does not understand how he has gotten there, but it does not matter, because he has no immunity and is immediately eaten by aliens.

Untitled
(No. 3 out of 6 stories)

Saya Tsuchiura, Akari Demachi, Aimi Matsuki, Anna Murakami

Mike worked on construction sites. He never complained about his job but, to tell the truth, he hated it. He had no money because he was an orphan and lived alone.

One day, a man wearing a gorgeous fur coat and a glossy hat came onto the site. Mike's immediate

thought was that he looked like a real gentleman. He approached and stared at Mike for a little time, and then asked,

"Are you...are you Michael?"

"Why yes, I am, but why do you know my name?"

"Mike, Mike! You're my son...my long lost son!"

"Really?" He felt that the stranger must be crazy, but he seemed so sincere.

"I have been looking for you for a long time. I was ready to give up, but, finally, I found you!"

Both of them are overcome with emotion, and neither is able to speak for a minute. After a pause, Mike said slowly "So I'm your son now, right, from now on?"

"Yes, yes, you are my son. I will do whatever I can for you."

Mike smiled gently. "Well...Dad...I am kind of short of money."

"No problem. I have plenty to spare. I'll support you..."

"Not over a lifetime I want to be rich now!"

There was a sharp crack and the stranger fell to his knees.

"What...happened...Mike?", he gasped.

"I'll get your money as an inheritance!" shouted Mike. He was grinning like a devil and in his hand was a pistol as black as night.

"Visitor"
(No. 4 out of 6 stories)

Marina Morisaki, Natsuko Mishima, Misaki Wakabayashi, Reika Naito

Mike works in a factory. He hates his job because it is monotonous and stressful work. He is sick of his daily routine. He feels like he has been working there forever.

One day, a tall man in a black coat appears at the factory and comes to see him.

"Come with me, my son. It is time for you to leave this place."

Mike is puzzled. "Are you my father?", he asks.

The tall stranger stops and thinks for a moment, then says "Yes. Yes, Mike, I suppose I am."

Mike agrees and steps away from his place in the factory. Suddenly, he feels a wrench and it is as if he is falling away from his body. He is rising away from the grey factory floor. "Where are we going?", he asks.

The tall stranger points at the sky. "I have come to release you from your painful existence."

"Does this mean..." Mike pauses for a moment, then continues. "Does this mean that I am dead?"

"Why Mike," says the stranger, "you were dead all along. Did you not realize?"

Untitled (No. 5 out of 6 stories)

Rikako Hosoi, Riho Mizushima, Kazuki Monzen, Yutaka Furumoto

Mike worked in a bookstore. He loved the job, because he loved books and thought of them as his friends. One day, walking home, he was surprised to see lots of posters with a photograph and 'Wanted' written on them, pinned to telegraph poles and walls. Looking closer, he was puzzled to find that the person in the photograph was himself.

The next day, a stranger came into his store, saw him and immediately cried "Haven't you seen the posters? You are my long lost son – come away from this boring life and live with me!" Although he loved his job and didn't want to leave his books, Mike agreed and followed the man.

Upon arriving at the man's home, he was given water in a little bowl. He thought this was a little strange, but everything was new, so didn't worry about it at that moment. He lifted the bowl and drank...

...when he woke up, it was to the sound of the man saying "I am not your father." Opening his eyes, he realized that he was in a cage and, taped to the bars was another printed poster with his picture. This one, however, said "For Sale".

Untitled (No. 6 out of 6 stories)

Takafumi Motoki, Yu Morooka, Koutarou Mori,

Emi Takemoto, Takuro Miura

...and Mike ran out of the store, with the owner running after and yelling.

Try as he might, however, he could not catch him. Mike caught up with the old one under the bridge, where he promised he would be waiting.

Upon seeing Mike, he said "This is where I live. Do you want to live with me?"

Mike looked around at the dirty water and piles of rubbish and was afraid.

He did not want to live there, but he wanted to be with his father.

He decided to give it a try.

Days passed, then weeks. They dined on wild grass and leftover fish. They were happy talking to each other or just sitting, looking at the river.

One day, however, the old one woke to find that Mike was gone. He looked up and down the riverbank and all over the neighbourhood. When passing in front of the shop where he had found him after so many years, finally he saw him.

There was his son with his neck circled by a chain. As he watched, the store owner came out and put a bowl of food in front of Mike, who ate it quickly.

His son was happy here. Sadly, the old one walked away, his tail hanging down between his legs.

Burn for Desert

Natsumi Kasahara

People cannot explain about colors exactly. Red, for example. It is just a formal word to express a general color of red, so we do not claim that the color of sky looks just red. We have known that the sky has various colors since childhood, but people have lived as they looked down the ground without notice. When did we start to do that? I don't know.

Under the red sky, a man was walking in a red desert. His dusty white tatters and stiff and dry hair were painted red through and through. A burning red, a raising red as the flame of love, the sky crowds all of human desires into itself.

"Eternal sunset! Sky in my dream! Here it is! Here he is! This is the end of the world!"

A man went up a sandy mountain with a stick which was like remains sucking moisture. As often as he took a step forward, his packing, which was an outfit for camping and a rusty iron birdcage, rolled right and left. He made his arms and legs move at irregular rhythm. His mouth moved too. One word got out while he stepped.

"Eternal red! Endless dream! Drop in the dream! And be reborn! And..."

He looked for all the world like a missionary to a word of hope or like a funny toy to utter a word. Probably, he had a feeling that he would be the former. His attitude seemed dignified very much. It was the only good point of his all.

Sky of bird, Endless dream, Thanks for everything, Happiness of love, Dream of love, Give the heart, to everything.

The sun set down.

A desert properly has a wide range of temperature over time. A man had a preparation for getting over the night. He took a lantern, a teakettle, a small pot, a pan, three boxes of matches, a pocketknife, a clasp knife, a few sticks of jerky, water stoked in a big leather bag out of his pack. A sleeping bag was not produced, because he could take up a position, where was a fold of sand hills hiding the moonlight. He unburdened a birdcage. A bird inside a cage cried "Coo-o" only one time, and he gave it water with a small pot. He also guzzled water down, and after his turn, he got some dried fruits in return from a water leather bag.

"Where did you come across this rare bird?"

An old man tossed his voice from darkness behind the fire. Smiling confidently, a

man pushed the cage near a sudden partner of dinner in the desert. "God of bird at the ancient earth A ceasing shape on the eternal ground A heavenly flame burnt ash Holy water make it pure white"

After all his way to talk sounded very strange, the old man thought. Although they had a small supper together from about three hours before, the old man was surprised at his strange words without losing interest. Through conversation, he realized that the man was a poet whose writings were famous and popular in a whole world over. He demanded a little over two hours to understand this man's spell. It was like that.

"Word of dream Destined lip Thousands of colors of flags Trailed by the voice of hope Living in people's dream Words loved by them Playing the word of melody Lip entrusted by heaven Thousands of dreams Lay the owner of the word on Living."

It was very troublesome even to hear, an old man thought; still he listened to his word. He regarded it as a resource for getting over this night in the desert with whirling dangers and anxieties inside, so he played with it as a riddle. It looked like the Sphinx because of being in the desert, he thought. An old man did not say this similitude to this sudden actor of dinner, since he thought that it seemed troublesome not only to speak in similitudes but also to hear the poet's reply.

A man had spoken his story while smoking a cigarette taken from the old man.

"Illness of human desire Everlasting life Endless dream of bandits One moment of devilish saint Rips the people off One moment of idiots in dust Rips the earth off One moment of captives of sweet flowers Ripped half petals of love"

"Didn't you have an interest in the everlasting life?"

"Eternal life Desert of demise No universe in people"

"You mean...the eternal life is in this desert?"

"End of the ground Earth lost water of life Desert has only demise Innumerable stars in the sky Breathe in the world tomorrow Pure white moon in the sky Leave from the world yesterday Sultry sun in the sky Burn the human body until today."

"Umm...Is it a special code or something?"

"Desert flower"

"Desert flower? You said the word, captives of sweet flowers, just now. So, a flower means lovers?"

"Nothing"

"Am I wrong? It's too hard to answer."

"No flower blooms in the desert."

"Hey, you can speak words normally!"

"The earth Ground superior life Sands fell in the distant sky Dreamtime
is not owned by master is not owned by people is not owned by human Looking
for God of nature."

A man wore some dirt clothes as dead leaves, but he looked very young and brilliant. Maybe, his age was getting over the teenager shortly before. He had a slender body and black eyes like an ant. The old man started to talk,

"So, you said, you couldn't find your ideal in the society or in your life or in human relation, even if you traveled thousands of countries? And so, where will you live? Can you live in the nature like this desert? Hey, man. Even this desert is living now. I'm working in here. Do you know Desert Rose? It's a special stone shaped like rose. I hear it is made through a mineral melted water crystallized at a peculiar temperature. It shows that a desert really had water in the past. I have searched for it to buy, because its stone is rare enough for being estimated as a valuable thing in the market. In the desert a flower blooms. And it feeds me. Me and my family."

"Bandit of guilt Embodiment of un-excusable greed."

"You are a bandit too. Everything around you is a stolen article from the nature."

The young man shut his mouth at this moment, and he wore an ugly expression for a while. After that, he uttered his passage as if squeezing it out.

"Unknown spirit blooms in the ground Here is ethics Here is universe
Who knows love Cry for love So the heart Become Eternal way."

Though getting on in years, the old man had a tenacious body despite a lot of wrinkle on his face. His robust build told of his pain to work with vivacity in the society. A few years ago he retired from his job. His son and grandson had succeeded to make his family business work in our village. The boss who he was took care of for a long time died only recently. A lot of his coworkers seemed to have aged a lot after retirement. He did not want to be as infirm as them, so he looked for something to make a religion. While he struggled, his dearest wife passed away. That was the way it goes. He had known it from way back. It was a lie what he talked to a young man a little time ago. Because he wanted to be alone, an old man went in the desert even at the night. He hoped that he would be able to look many beautiful views, like a grand sunset, majestic sand mountains, and so on, while he can walk only by himself. Searching for Desert Rose was just his hobby for him; his wife had loved that flower.

The next morning, an old man and a young man watched morning glow side by side. A fiery magnificent sunrise dyed a whole sandy sea with red as beautiful as yesterday's sunset. Two men's bodies were covered in warm red equally. A young man

thought that he could not see the world showed by the sun as the hope or as the despair. In due course his impression was that he achieved the valuable answer at last, so he came to this desert with a bird called "a pigeon", which he had mediated the meaning since childhood as well as the sun.

"Farewell!"

An old man was surprised a sudden loud voice from his side, and looked to an expression of a young man. His eyes were red with crying since last night. He had a sore throat from drinking, because an old man cheered him up with drinking all the night through. Although he had the worst condition for body and mind, a young poet shouted with looking the sun straightforward.

"Don't go away! I want to know the eternal more! My love! Don't go away! You will be gone! I will be straight little by little! Don't go away! Farewell! I love you! I love you! I loved it!"

A pigeon was dead in an iron birdcage. It was killed by a young man. He could not make any excuse because it is natural that a pigeon came to die in the heat of the desert. Even so this bird had lived until that time miraculously. Two men ate this miracle after roasting. They ate it laughing. They said it "Tasteless" as feeling funny, because both of them did not know the way to cook a pigeon. Even though their dusty white clothes turned red by a blood of this bird, they were laughing. When a young man talked about the meaning of a pigeon after eating, they cried a little. Though, after that, two men became able to think that it goes.

The Class War

Aya Sugiyama

At the elementary school, one class has two naughty boys, Tom and Huck. They always make fun of teachers. Of course, they do so today.

Teacher: (writing on the chalkboard nervously) Water is ice when the temperature becomes under 0.

Tom: (He imitated the teacher exaggeratedly. He faced his classmates)

Huck: (He began to snicker)

Some classmates realized what Huck did and noticed him. The others kept studying. The class was quiet except for Tom's snickering voice.

Teacher: The ice is more- What's the matter, Tom?

Tom: Nothing special.

Teacher: Well... I'll change the question. What's so funny?

Tom: Ah... Water changes to ice.

Teacher: Is it such a funny thing? I don't think so.

Tom: Why not? Water is very similar to humans.

Teacher: What do you mean?

Tom: When the human gets angry, it is very similar to boiled water. On the other hand, when they ignore something, it is a metaphor for ice, don't you think?

Teacher: (With a sigh) ...That's right. But this is not the reading class, it is science.

Tom: Then you had better start again.

Teacher: (He was irritated a little. But he took heart at once with a sigh. And he started again to write on the board) ... The ice is more-

Tom: (He made faces at the teacher. And then, he began to imitate him)

Huck: (He incited Tom with a teasing gesture)

Some classmates began to snicker because of these two. Others smiled wryly.

Teacher: ...What's happened in this class? Why is it so noisy?

Huck: Because water is so funny.

Teacher: I already have heard it. Does everyone think it is a funny thing?

Huck: (He looked around the class) ...I think so.

Teacher: I don't.

Huck: Then, why don't you keep going? Go ahead.

Teacher: (He swallowed his anger. And tried to start class again)

(Bell rang)

Tom: The class is over!

Huck: Let's go out!

Teacher: Quiet, please! Mr. Sawyer and Mr. Finn come with me to the teacher's room.
NOW.

Tom and Huck looked each other and ran away from the class room. The teacher followed them. After they disappeared, the classroom filled with laughter.

Drama

“Act 5 Christmas Dance Party”

Masateru Namao

Nicholas Everything this morning seems very strange. Things look ordinary, but there's something different about them, too. Don't you agree?

Hannah Yes, I do. Something mysterious has happened to us. There are so many unanswered questions.

Emma I agree. Demetrius loves me, but I don't know how. He's mine at last, but in many ways he isn't. What's happened to us?

Nicholas Are you sure that we're awake? Perhaps, we're still asleep and dreaming? Was Mr. Mackenzie really here? Did he really invite us to follow him?

Hannah Yes, and my father, too?

Emma And Ms. Laura.

Alexander He told us to follow him to the Christmas party.

Nicholas Then we are awake! Come, let's follow him. And on the way we can all discuss dreams.

[George, Laura and Bob arrive.]

George Ladies and Gentlemen. The Christmas Dance Party has started. Please enjoy the dance with your lover. First of all, I and Laura who is the vice principal of this school will show you opening dance ceremony.

[They dance. Bob also dances.]

George Thank you everyone. Next, the school workers give us a famous play of William Shakespeare. The title is 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'.

[Play starts.]

Dominic Hello. If our play makes you angry, we are sorry. We want you to be amused not angry. We want to show you our simple skill. This is our plan. We want you to enjoy our play. That's why we're here. The actors are ready. From our little play, you'll learn many things. You won't be sorry that you've seen your play. We hope you won't be angry.

Marvin [as Demetrius] Save your words for your enemies.

Avery [as Hermia] But I don't understand why Lysander disappeared so suddenly. What have you done with him?

Marvin [as Demetrius] You think that I'm a murderer?

Avery [as Hermia] But where's Lysander? Oh, good Demetrius, please give him back to me.

Marvin [as Demetrius] I'd prefer to give his body to my dogs.

Avery [as Hermia] So you have killed him! Did you kill him while he was sleeping?

Marvin [as Demetrius] You're wrong to attack me like this. Lysander is still alive.

Avery [as Hermia] Then tell me that he's well.

Marvin [as Demetrius] I'll rest here for a short time. I need to sleep.

Dominic [as Puck] I've put love-juice in the wrong man's eyes! Oh, purple flower of Cupid, fill this young man's heart with my special power. Oh! Helena is here with the young Athenian.

Warner [as Lysander] Why do you think that I'm making fun of you?

Betty [as Helena] How can you forget your love for her so quickly?

Marvin [as Demetrius] Oh Helena, my perfect dream, my beautiful princess!

Betty [as Helena] This is crazy!

Warner [as Lysander] Yes, stop being so unkind, Demetrius. You can have her now. I love her more than life itself.

Avery [as Hermia] Lysander, why did you leave me alone in the wood so suddenly?

Warner [as Lysander] How can a man stay when love tells him to go?

Avery [as Hermia] What love could take you from my side?

Warner [as Lysander] My love for Helena. She brightens up the night more than a million stars.

Betty [as Helena] I understand it all now. The three of you have planned this joke on me together.

Warner [as Lysander] Stay, Helena, and hear my excuse. My love, my life, my heart, my beautiful Helena!

Betty [as Helena] Oh, excellent acting!

Avery [as Hermia] Lysander, stop making fun of her like this.

Marvin [as Demetrius] Yes, if you don't stop this silly game, I'll stop it for you!

Avery [as Hermia] You thief of love! What have you done?

Betty [as Helena] That's not true, little woman!

Avery [as Hermia] Little? Why do you call me 'little'?

Betty [as Helena] Be sensible, good Hermia. Don't be so angry with me. I've always loved you like a sister.

Warner [as Lysander] Follow me into the wood, if you're brave enough. I'll prove with my sword that my love for Helena is stronger than yours!

Marvin [as Demetrius] Follow you? No, I'll go with you side by side.

Avery [as Hermia] They're going to fight because of you.

Dominic [as Puck] Asleep. Put the juice of this flower into Lysander's eyes. Lysander will be in love with Hermia again and Demetrius will still be in love with Helena.

[The play finishes. Laura and Bob are dumb.]

George [crying] It was so great. It was amazing. I was moved. Your play touched my heart. You dig out my soul from deep inside of me. The prize is all yours.

[George gives money. They are delighted. All of them except students leave.]

Alexander Hey, I feel something strange.

Emma Yeah, me too... it felt a bit like our dream in the Santa Claus Wood.

Nicholas No, not a bit. I think this story is exactly the same as our story. It's like the play told our story. Lysander as Alexander, Hermia as Hannah, Demetrius as me, Nicholas, and Helena as Emma.

Alexander Yes... in the forest, I began to love Emma, not Hannah. Then Nicholas began to love Emma, too. I don't know why, but 'surely' we became crazed, and Nicholas and I started fighting.

Emma After all, our story ended like this, Alexander took back his love, Hannah. Nicholas still loves Emma from when he changed his mind in the wood.

Nicholas Maybe... I hate such a silly idea but I cannot help thinking about this. Perhaps the fairies in the wood played tricks with our feelings. It means our emotion, our love was controlled by someone unseen.

Hannah I don't think so. I don't think that our feelings were controlled because we know that, don't we? Alexander gave me a necklace and it made him remember our love and overcome madness. And Nicholas, while you were mad, Emma told her love sincerely, and you realized her love and came back to us from madness. You see our feelings are not controlled, our love is not played by fairies. We choose, we found our love by ourselves. Why are you so suspicious? Why can't you trust your feelings?

Alexander Hannah speaks the truth. We already know that our feelings are not controlled or played. It is we who feel this strongly. We should believe our choice and decision. We should be glad to be with the one we love.

Puck Stop it!

[Puck enters, everyone stop motion]

Puck Oh, I didn't expect that this love juice caused such a big accident. Also, I didn't expect that the magic would be lost by these high school students! They are only the human beings! It should be impossible for humans to remove the magic by themselves. The power of love...this is what removes the magic. I will never rely on this juice! I will keep on loving till he notices, just like them. Alexander, Hannah, Nicholas & Emma. I will believe in the strength of my emotion. So I don't need this juice anymore, I will give it to you!

Oh, sorry. You don't need it either, because you are the human beings. You can make your wish come true by yourselves, just like these boys & girls.

Oh no! Christmas is coming! I have to prepare the presents for the

children all around the world! I have to go now, so good-bye! Have a nice Christmas!

See you at your bedsides, I, your honest Puck, will be there while you are dreaming "a Christmas Night's Dream".

[Lights fade out. End]



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Colophon

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The background of the entire image is a dark, moody photograph of an interior space, likely a hallway or library. In the foreground, a large, glowing spherical light fixture is visible, casting a warm, yellowish light. The walls appear to be made of dark wood. The overall atmosphere is quiet and scholarly.

C R O P

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