



mcu*
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CROP

Creativity Rising Original Production

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HOME

Katsuhiko Azuma

Waiting waiting waiting...
Each of you come back each time
Long time from the morning to the evening and night
Cold day and hot day
Open my door
Mother father daughter son
Everyone

Be relaxed inside me
Always I protect you
Cold day and hot day
Keep your mind relaxed

AIRPLANE

Yu Shimizu

All over the world
I'm flying
Round and round
Pilot is my best friend
Long flight is tough but if
Anything happened
No need to be worried
Enjoy your wonderful flight

THE MIRROR

Katsuhiko Azuma

snigeb gninrom gnol, gnol ym
.m.a 00:5 si emit
siht ekil emit gninrom eht evol I

tseilrae eht pu steg rehtom
tsafkaerb rieht ekam ot sah ehs
yusb si ehs

draeb sih sevahs rehtraf
ti gniod eh elihw
rethgual kcab dloh ot yrt syawla
detrotnoc si ecaf sih esuaceb

em fo tnorf ni tops a rof gnithgif syawla era lrig eht dna yob eht
yrruh a ni htob era yeht sseug I
ylsuoires riah sih seod yob
puekam ni emit fo tol a sdneps lrig

noitaraperp yliad rieht rof
naelc yats ot evah I
flesym gnihsilop
yadot enoyreve ees ot gnitiaw

THANKS AND LOVE

Katsuhiko Azuma

I have a precious family
Always they are kind to
Me since I was little
To be a real family
He, the boy is my brother and my real friend
Each other, we love
Do my best to love my family
Only thing you I can say about my family
Great time with you

Picture of us
I took it
Clear my family's smile
The most precious memory
U have departed, but
Remember forever
Even if you have gone to the sky
Only you I have
Forever be the star
U are the precious
See you again in the next world

LIFE AND DEATH

Yu Shimizu

Living seems to be normal for us.

I am one of them.

For having fun, we need life.

Each of us has life and living in pursuit of something.

Appreciation is sometimes neglectable when we think living is natural for us.

Nothing is expected in life.

Death sometimes happens unexpectedly and suddenly.

Do you imagine you or your important people die? Everything that has a beginning must have an end.

All we need to do is to make every single day count.

That is what we can do right now to be Happy.

CAFE LATTE

Yu Shimizu

Coffee and milk

Anytime anywhere

Feeling good to drink

Even if you are depressed or tired

Let yourself go to the café

And you can be refreshed

Taste is so good

The more you drink, the more you love it

Everyone feels happy with it

MARINE LIFE

Sota Kanagami

I remember fearing the sound of the waves crashing. The scariest place for me was the ocean. I remember the first time I was bought an illustrated book. I was able to memorize all the creatures that lived in the local sea. As I searched for them and played with them on the beach, I realized the fascination of sea creatures.

I remember the first time I went windsurfing alone. It was the same feeling as the first time I rode a bicycle.

I remember the first time I went to depths my feet could not reach.

I remember the first time I jumped into the ocean. The fish looked bigger than they did at the aquarium. I thought that the world under water was as big as space.

I strongly remember the day I first saw a swimming stingray. I thought it was as if an alien was flying through the water.

I remember almost colliding with a sea turtle in Okinawa. I also remember our eyes met and I just barely avoided it. There were many people who collided with turtles that day and I was glad I didn't too.

I remember catching a crab that was bigger than my hand. I was sure those scissors would rip my fingers off.

I remember the first time I crossed the ocean and crossed two cities. I went to Morito Shrine, where the guardian god of the sea is enshrined, and put my hands together. Since then, I have gone there every year for my first visit to the shrine.

I cannot remember when I first went into the sea.

I remember the day I windsurfed with flying fish for the first time. I found that they could fly very fast for short periods of time.

I also remember the day I learned I was faster than a flying fish. I found that I could move faster on the ocean than a boat.

I remember the day I was windsurfing at 70 km/h. It was so quiet; it was as if there was a vacuum around me. The location was a completely unknown sea in Atami. The wind was so strong that I saw for the first time a small tornado forming.

I remember being swallowed by a wave bigger than me. I was spun around like a washing machine, and I didn't even know which way was up.

I remember the day I saw the sun rise over the ocean. There was no one else on the ocean so I had the view all to myself and it was amazing. I thought it was the most beautiful thing on earth.

I remember traveling by ferry. Taking a bath with a view of the horizon was amazing.

I remember talking for hours on the beach with friends. I don't know how many bags of potato chips I ate. At night we would stargaze while drinking Corona beer. It was the best beer I have ever had.

I also remember lying on the beach and watching fireworks.

I remember riding windsurfing on a lake in Italy. Surrounded by precipitous cliffs, I was able to experience a majestic nature that I could not find in Japan. The water in the lake was so clean I could drink it straight from the lake.

I remember the day when steam was rising from the ocean. The temperature was below 5 degrees, and my fingers were so red they felt like they were going to fly off like missiles. It was snowing by noon.

I remember the sea after the typhoon left. I saw many piles of trash. We must not forget that the sea is still screaming.

I remember the day I woke up to the sound of the waves. It is the most soothing sound now.

WHAT IS A “TEACHER”?

Koki Matsushima

I will meet a man someday.

Unconsciously I will say hello to him, but he will never respond.

I can see a boy crying alone.

Hastily I give a handkerchief to him, and we talk about the future.

I could not have been forward before.

Surprisingly an unknown Superman showed up, so I rode on its back.

“Of course, I know I am not a Superman, but I must be a hero of someone.”

SAKURA

Sakura Ideguchi



I have watched over many students here for 160 years.
All the students who come here are
Studious, kind and nice!
I hope every day that the future of my students
will be bright.
Today is the day many students leave from me.

Even though I've seen it 160 times, I never get used to it and every year I'm sad.
But they must have a bright future ahead of them after learning here.
You did a great job for 4 years. The cherry blossoms are celebrating you too!
Don't forget me in the future, and be a shining person in society.
To be honest, I miss you, so come visit me sometime.
Congratulations on your graduation!!!!
.... Don't cry me! New students are entering school.
I'll have to dress nicely to welcome you. Spring is sad but happy.
It's a strange feeling. I want to continue to cherish encounters and partings.
Oops, here comes the first student.
Welcome to Meiji Gakuin University!! Congratulations on your enrollment!!!!

SCHOOL

Sakura Ideguchi



FORBIDDEN FRUITS

Juri Yamada

One day I met a beautiful boy,
In room, I played with a toy.
He came in through a tiny window,
Dropping giant dusky shadow.

He's flapping wings on his back,
And flying falling a circle track,
He reached the floor, said "I am Fidy.
Put away your toys, cause here isn't tidy."

I can't escape that fated duty,
I fell in love with eerie beauty.
I cleaned my room as I was tame,
"Tell me about you, why you came?"

Fidy smiled with a scam,
"A smart, intelligent angel, I am.
"By the way, What's the oranges?
"There were many storages."

"Oh yes, my family is orange farmer,
"Isolated, rural, in a corner.
"My mother often says to me,
"Never have an orange of the tree."

With beautiful face and cheeks red,
Evil Fidy smiled and said,
"But you want to eat some orange, right?
"You can eat them all in sight."

Then the ban is seemed sweet.
These fruits are for me to eat,
Just I was crazy for Fidy,
There was no way perfidy.

The fruit I ate was so tasty,
There's no regards to my safety.
I find my sin and lose my calm.
I broke my promise to my mom!

Then Fidy's figure changes.
And thick fog spreads ranges.
So He is not one I liked,
His horribly big back is spiked.

I escaped, never to be found again.
But He will chase me, like a chain.
So whisper angel is serpent.
Don't let your heart be his servant!

CHICKEN ME

Kana Takahashi

Bit my lip.
Bit my chicken sandwich.
Human blood on white meat.
Inside the red dot,
Was parallel chicken me.

THE PICTURE OF FLAMINGO

Kozue Kokubu

I've lived in Takaoka city, Toyama pref. until I entered the university. My hometown has a lot of nature. I like the part very much because I can feel smell of nature such as flowers, trees, and water.

Especially, there is a place that I feel very comfortable and has a lot of memories. It is the Kojo Park. Kojo means the old castle. In this park, there are traces of the stone wall and the castle's moat. It's so dirty and deep that even if you drop something, you can't pick it up.

Also, this park has different land scape depending on the four seasons. In spring, many blossoms bloom and the cherry blossom festival is held. Many people come there and eat delicious foods at the stalls. In summer, all leaves are turned green, and I can hear the voice of cicada. I feel summer when I hear this sound. In fall, all leaves turned red and yellow. There is a shrine in this park, and I can eat baked potato because an owner of it bakes for citizens by using leaves. In winter, it snows and piles up on the tree. It is very beautiful and so bright even at night because of the snow.

It was summer when I was 4 years old. One day, there was a city competition for kindergarteners and elementary school students to draw landscapes of Kojo Park. There is a small zoo in the park. I drew a picture of a flamingo with my mother. In the zoo, many animals bark and cry. Also, the zoo has a distinctive smell. It is sour and smells like rotten animal meat and grass. So, it distracted me, and I gave up on drawing halfway through. "Did you give up? It will become dark if you don't hurry," my mother said. But I didn't reply and went to the playground. "Hmm...I help you so let's finish it together." So, I managed to finish it with my mother helping me more than half. The picture, which was mostly drawn by my mother, was of such a quality that people couldn't believe it was drawn by a kindergartener. But I submitted it to the competition.

About three months later, in my kindergarten, I was awarded at a school assembly. At that time, I don't know what the award is. Only what I remember now all students looked at me and felt nervous. But after two weeks, I had to go to Takaoka City Hall. I knew that I won the mayor's award at that time. More besides me, about 10 students were here. Also, some local journalists were ready to take photos of this ceremony. Its room was a little bit small. In the center of the room, there was a large black chair and a large desk that seemed to be expensive. It was just the mayor's office. The mayor

called each name of students and gave a certificate. I also received it. But now I didn't remember the moment, so maybe I wasn't more nervous than at the school assembly.

After the ceremony, my family held a small party in my house with a small cake. My mother said, "Are you happy?" "Yes, because I can eat delicious food thanks to the award." Mother sighed. "I have complex feelings like to be punished by Heaven."

After a while, I went for a walk around the moat in the park with my mother. I took my favorite doll. But I dropped it when I watched the ducks in the moat. I cried and thought this may be the punishment that my mother said.

COVID19

Steven Dreher

I remember to not waste the time during the pandemic, everyone in my family including myself were learning new languages and all of them were a different language. I was learning Spanish, my mother was learning Korean, my father was learning Japanese, and my younger brother was learning English. We would teach some phrases or words to each other and speaking in that language as long as possible.

I remember Having an online "Nomikai" on zoom. But because we were still under 20, we were drinking things like orange juice, apple juice and soda. And I loved eating a whole bag of BBQ chips and popcorns by myself. The fact that all of us got ready for popcorn to watch a movie before seeing each other on zoom which we haven't talked about yet made it funnier and more enjoyable.

I remember hearing every one of my family saying hello on our phone. It would sometimes change to "Oigo" "Yoboseyo" "moshimoshi" which all means hello in our language we have learned.

I remember contacting some friends that I haven't met for a while and talking about the good old days and things we were doing while we haven't seen each other.

I remember feeling guilty talking with my friends on the phone and watching some movies and dramas during online classes.

I remember having difficulties to hear what people were saying because of the masks.

I remember my glasses would always get foggy when I speak with someone because of my mask and laughing about it with my friends.

I remember sending each other some funny videos that we found on social media without any messages for almost the whole time during the pandemic and continuing until now.

I didn't remember the faces and voices of some people that I used to be with because it had been a long time since I saw them. I felt a bit sad about this and wished to have the regular life I had.

I remember having a conversation with a friend of mine. "How's it going?" "Nothing. Same as usual." "I want to go somewhere rather than staying inside the whole time." "Almost everyone wants to." And we started to search for places that we could go and even places that were too far away, but we would make plans if we actually went there such as the food we want to eat, the things that we want to see, and the things we wanted to do.

I remember feeling nostalgic listening to old songs and connecting them to the memories when I was listening to them.

I remember playing video games that I used to play when I was in elementary school on my DS. The music and BGM of some of the games were still in my head as if it was last week that I heard them.

I remember the moment that I saw some of my friends that I haven't met for a while. Everything had changed. His hair color became a lot easier to find even in a crowd, it was a mixture of red and black, he became a lot taller than me, and had tattoos in his neck even though he used to be shy. After I saw him, I thought he was someone that I never met.

I remember being happy to know more about my family, friends and other people and things from having a lot of time to talk with them or search for more information about things I was interested in.

Recuerdo estar muy feliz después de poder leer un libro en español a pesar de que era para niños pequeños y usaba mucho el diccionario. (I remember being so happy after I was able to read a Spanish book even though, it was for small kids, and I used the dictionary a lot.)

GREAT GOLDEN GIFT

Masaya Suzuki

I remember the days my house was full of pets' call, smell, love, colors, and energy of their lives. Thanks to them, I could feel I'm not alone wherever I was in the house. They made my life richer.

I remember I had a male Shiba Inu. His name was "Gon." Gon was in my house before I was born. I had asked my mother the mean of Gon, but I can't remember that now.

I remember I had a male parakeet. His name was "Gu-Chan." When Gu-Chan was a baby, Gu-Chan was gray, so we named him "Gu-Chan", but as Gu-Chan grew up, Gu-Chan became a beautiful blue bird.

I remember the day when I came home from the elementary school, my mother told me that Gon's lead somehow broke, and Gon ran away. Our neighbors told my mother Gon was on the road, and my mother chased Gon with a dog snack Gon liked. After my mother found Gon, not to excite Gon, my mother showed that snack from afar. Then, Gon ran towards my mother and my mother took Gon home.

I remember Gu-Chan was not good at flying because Gu-Chan was not wild.

I remember the days when Gon couldn't eat enough food by himself. That's why, memories with Gon late in his life are in the hospital, and in the car on the way to the hospital. Every day, I and my mother took Gon to the hospital after I came home from elementary school. In the car, I played TOKIO's "Lyric" I liked at that time, and my mother drove me to the hospital.

I remember I often put Gu-Chan on my shoulder. I put Gu-Chan on my finger and took him out of the cage. Gu-Chan sang in my ear, bit my earlobe, and I press my cheek against Gu-Chan's face. Gu-Chan sometimes dropped poop on my shoulder.

I remember Gon was clever and didn't bark much.

I remember Gu-Chan loved "Canary Seed" which is a kind of seed for small bird. I put this seed on my index finger, and I fed Gu-Chan from outside the cage.

I remember the days Gon was infused and Gon's expression at that time. I will never forget. After finishing drip, the liquid of drip infusion was around his neck. Because the form was so lovely, so I and my mother smiled a bit sadly.

I don't want to remember the parting after all. I know the parting is also important memories, but I want to lock them in my deep mind. I managed to overcome the

farewells because I was a kid, but I think I can't overcome them now, so I want to welcome a pet now. However, I want to tell them, "Thank you for being our family."

I remember Gon sometimes dug the hole in the garden. My mother often worried about it. I feel Gon have remnants of wildness as a descendant of wolves.

I remember Gon loved walking. Whenever we finished walking, Gon ate a lot of dog food and drank a lot, and I sometimes fed dog food from my hand. I can recall the texture as Gon's tongue lick my hand.

I remember the day I cried during the baseball game because sudden parting with Gu-Chan was so sad for me. I just couldn't stay calm. I don't remember the details and result of that game at all.

I remember my parents told me they bought Gu-Chan from the home improvement store in the neighboring town.

I remember I grew Gu-Chan from his childhood. Especially, I remember the time I and my mother fed Gu-Chan. In the Tatami-Room, we laid the newspaper, and we scooped the seed my mother boiled on the small plastic spoon. Gu-Chan liked eating.

I remember the day Gon tried to finish his own life. I knew this day would come one day, but when I faced such a situation for real, I was not able to be normal.

I remember the parting day with Gu-Chan. I don't want to remember too much about it. I have a lot of regrets. The biggest regret is I couldn't see through the Gu-Chan's latter end. I want to tell Gu-Chan I'm really sorry.

I remember the day my house lost the pets' colors and became a little simple and poor. However, thanks to them, I can feel I'm not alone wherever I'm on this planet. The days with them gave my heart eternal colors and richness.

GIRLISHNESS AND BOYISHNESS

Otoka Ikeda

Reading "Girl" by Jamaica Kincaid reminds me of a number of words I have been told while I live as a girl for 19 years because of my gender. I have an older brother, so I was often taught that even in the same family, boys and girls have to behave differently. My brother was allowed to do things, but I was a girl, so it was dangerous and I should not do it, or I should do it when I was older. My parents' words, "Don't go out so late at

night even though you are a girl," and "What if you are attacked for wearing such revealing clothing? I suppose those words are born out of actual concern for me, but I still hated those words and this society that makes my parents say so. I did not think much of what my parents said was wrong. Because really, in this world, girls are more vulnerable and suffer a lot of destruction. Why is there a difference in physical ability between women and men? I sometimes feel very frustrated. I often hate being a girl, even though it should be so much fun to live as a girl. On the other hand, I also believe that the meaning of "living as a girl" has changed dramatically in the modern age. For me, that means doing my nails, putting on makeup, and wearing pretty clothes, but I do not believe that this is a privilege reserved only for girls. Even boys do nails and makeup and wear pretty clothes and not all girls do. Still, for me, I love the small nails and curvy bodies that are unique to girls. My nails are pretty even without nail polish, and I really like clothes that show the lines of my body, especially my upper body. Living as a girl is a very nice thing, but I feel that it is due to this society that I feel uncomfortable with it. Every year when the gender gap index is released in this country, we bemoan our country's low ranking and say that we are the lowest in the G7, or that we are inferior here compared to that country in Europe, and then we repeat the same thing the next year. Why is it that there are so many things a girl cannot do, yet so many things she must do? What kind of parent would tell a boy not to look like a slut? Why is it that there are so many expressions of sexual licentiousness used against women, but men are not accused of sexual licentiousness as much as women are? Why is it that women are expected to put on makeup, do their hair and take care of their appearance when they enter the workforce, but some men do not even wash their faces? Women are expected to be beautiful in many ways, and it is very stifling. This is completely my opinion, but I think there are so many cute girls out there. I feel that I have more chances to see a cute girl than I do cool boys, and this is probably because girls are more concerned about their appearance. I know that these girls are very concerned about their appearance, sometimes to the point of it being morbidly excessive. But I know that feeling very well. Maybe it is because I am a girl. It is really hard for me when I feel I am not pretty enough. My appearance is only for me, not for anyone else, so why do I worry about it, even though I should know it is strange. Also, as the girls are taught to cook in the poem, many parents teach girls how to make meals and do so less enthusiastically to boys. But strangely enough, when I look at famous chefs who appear on TV or in magazines, they are all men. The reason for this is obvious: parents do not teach their children to cook in order to turn them into chefs, but in anticipation of their future role as cooks when they get married. Men work outside the home and women stay at home to do housework. This mindset is so ingrained in our society that women will

never advance in society, and we will always lament the low gender gap index. Whenever I experience these little "just because you are a girl" moments, I feel the pain of living as a girl, but it is not only the pressure I feel from society, but also my own physical pain, and that is menstruation. Even if I do not like children, even if I do not want to start a family in the future, my body is designed to have children, and I have to bleed every month to do so. I really hate this, one week out of the month I am bleeding, and the week before that I am mentally unstable, my appetite increases, my body swells, and I get acne. I feel as if my body is telling me that I am designed to have children, that I was born to do so, and it is very upsetting. Of course, we know that boys have problems that only boys can understand. They may likewise feel pressured to "be like boys," although the intensity of this pressure may vary from person to person. We have some attributes as long as we are alive, and we may be prejudiced by others that we should be "like them." Be like woman, man, child, mother, Japanese, etc... These can be born at any age and in any place, and on the other hand, we are prone to hold these ideas ourselves. He is from that country so he would think this way, she is X years old so she wouldn't do that. It is easy to make assumptions like this. We cannot understand others if we stop thinking by applying stereotypes to them. This is true for those with whom one does not know well, but it is also true for those with whom one knows well, such as family members. I have never raised a child, and I am sure it must be hard beyond imagination, but I think it is very important for parents to respect their children as much as they do others. Children are immature beings and parents need to guide them, however if they think they are leading them in the right direction and trying to make them lead a life that fits their own stereotype, I am sure it will not make them happy. This story-poem tells us how parents love their daughters and what it is like to live as a girl. It says, "this is how to" and has an aspect of imposing that you have to do it while at the same time teaching information that will help the girl in her life. While everyone has their own difficulties in life, I hope that we can take the advice, which could be called nosiness, given to us by others and use it to live well. I read this poem from the standpoint of being a girl, but I think it is a learning experience even if you are not a girl or woman. Because people have their own difficulties in life. I imagine it would be interesting if there were a poem called "Boys" like this one. If girls have girlishness, then boys must also have boyishness and the oppression caused by it. In order to free ourselves from our "-ish," we must begin by realizing that we have that "-ish" too for someone else.

THE GIRL'S TWO TREASURES

Hina Nakada

One day, a girl walks in a park
It is large and deeply dark
A jewel, which is from her mommy
She said, "this is charm for me"

Suddenly, bird starts to peck
The shiny pendant on her neck
With a panic, her body freeze
But she manages to say "stop, please!"

Unfortunately, it's reckless
The bird has stolen her necklace
When the girl thought "that is the end"
She happened to see her friend

The boy has beautiful blue eyes
And he is incredibly wise
Now he is the sole clue for her
He asked to her, "what's the matter?"

But she didn't give any answer
Because she didn't want to bother
He said "I would like to help you"
The friendship of these two is true

"Let's go to the forest" he said
He thought it's where the bird was head
Because birds live on trees, he knew
His brain has power to break through

Too large and dark in the forest
to find it, so the boy suggest
"How about decoy with a shiner?"
"Birds like collecting what shines brighter"

He reflects a marble in sunlight
Then, they have the bird soon in sight
The bird is lured to its gleam
"Let us chase the bird!" the girl scream

Following the bird, they found its nest
There's the thing she cherishes best
Now she is filled with big pleasure
'Cause she could get back her treasure

BEHIND MY SHINY LIFE IN THE US

Minami Furuya

I remember the first time when I went on a road trip to San Francisco with my Chinese friends. That was a coincidence all of them except me were Chinese. When we got there, they started speaking Chinese. I felt sad because I couldn't speak it. All I know about Chinese is Ni hao.

I remember the last time I argued with my roommate. She said to me, "I feel like you sometimes take me for granted." It was not true so I wanted to explain why I did not take her for granted, but I could not express myself well, because my first language is not English. I cried and said, "Damn it!"

I remember the day when I arrived in the US. I was excited and at the same time nervous. Then, one community talked to me and asked me, "Are you an international student." they said they could take me to the Griffith Observatory. I thought I was lucky because they said they could take me there for free. However, when we get there and walked around, they suddenly sat down and pulled something from their backpack. That was the Bible. Unfortunately, I am not Christian, so I felt Oh My God.

I remember the moment when my first party failed, my friend and I drank 80 percent Vodka at the pregame of the Halloween party. We were too drunk, and I threw up a lot. We finally ended up not going to the party that day. I jumped into my bed and said "Fuck."

I remember whenever I saw my friends in Japan post on Instagram stories or posts. They looked like they were having so much fun without me. I felt lonely but I could not express my true feelings because I was too shy. I wish I could tell them these three words eight letters, "I miss you."

I remember the day when a pervert talked to me in Westwood. He asked me my name, and I am not good at telling a lie, so I said, "My name is Minami." Fortunately I was safe, but do not tell your real name to strangers. Be a liar.

I remember the moment when my housemates were drinking and smoking until 2 am, I couldn't sleep because it was so loud. I should've said, "Shut up."

I remember the moment when I heard the news a girl was kidnapped at the UCLA parking lot. But, how lucky she was. She could run away. Maybe she was saved by Jesus. She would say, "Thank god."

I remember the first time I went to a dune. It was so hot. That was like 38 degrees. The worst thing was I drank the entire water bottle. I was seriously dying., I have to appreciate the fact that I am still alive. Let me say, "Thank you."

I remember the day when I was being quiet when my friends were talking. Because they talked so fast and I could not listen. The only word I said was, "Yeah."

I remember the moment when my boyfriend and I argued about me drinking alcohol. He is Muslim. When he saw me drinking for the first time, he said, "When you are drinking alcohol, you don't look attractive. I felt like, "Well, it's my life. Fuck it it's fine."

I don't remember the feeling when I was dancing at a party and a guy came behind me. But I remember he made me freeze.

I remember the day when I went to the hospital at UCLA. My stomach tends to bloat, but it got worse since I had been to the US. That was from stress perhaps. The doctor asked me if I had enough Japanese friends. I answered I did not have enough Japanese friends, but I had local friends whom I made so far. Then she said to me, "What about making Chinese friends?" Once again, I only know, Ni hao.

THE GOLDEN RABBIT

Sakura Ideguchi

Emily and her mom came home,
They saw a rabbit, all alone.
It was dirty, needed a hand,
A sight that made them understand.

Mom thought taking it far away,
To find it a different place to stay.
But Emily felt a different way,
She saw the rabbit as a friend.

"Mom, let's clean it, make it bright,
Give it a home, make it right.
It will be a friend, you'll see,
For you, for me, for us to be."

With gentle words, mom agreed,
They washed the rabbit, indeed.
Bubbles flew, and water twirled,
The rabbit's fur, a brand-new world.

From its fluffy, and dirty fur,
A golden nugget did appear.
Their lives changed, and shining bright,
It's prosperity, a joyful light.

They grew together, faced it all,
In laughter and love, they'd grew.
A tale of kindness, all to see,
Emily, her mom, and friend so free.

Through seasons' dance, their story spun,
A tapestry woven, with colors won.
With each new day, their hearts would sing,
In the warmth that true friendship brings.

And as time passed, their bond held strong,
In unity, they all belonged.
A story of kindness, love, and care,
A friendship they'd forever share.

SANDY BEACH

Rei Azumi

My girlfriend is too kind. When we walked along the street to go to a café, she found a dead cicada. It was dried to a pulp. If you stepped on it, you would hear the sound like snacks.

“Let’s bury this cicada in the park,” she said.

“Why?”

“It’s pitiful.”

“Right,” I thought.

Her behavior may be odd or make people who have subtle hearts be attracted to her like me.

We two arrived at a small park. There’s no one but us.

Everything, like swing and slide, is going to be sucked in to the sandy beach. It seems certain, to me.

She began to bury it softly in the sand under a tree.

Cicadas were singing.

The voice is sucked in sandy beach dyed by setting sun.

“She is kind” I thought.

When I was seeing her acting, I imagined the world of cicadas.

Cicadas may have monotheism. Believers rest on Sunday.

Or they hate being buried in sand.

Worlds of sand may be hell for them.

I looked at her.

“Sorry” she said.
“How about riding on the swings?”
After she buried it, we are being shook by the old swings.
Songs of cicadas sometimes gets big, or small, or disappear.
“I may not like human-centered thinking,” she said.
I was reminded of a Chinese eel, which we saw in aquarium.
Chinese eel must think Chinese eel a wise subject by Chinese eel-wise way.
Human can’t understand it.
However, this thought is too human-wise.
“Everything right is sucked in sandy beach,” I thought.
She was waiting my reply. I reminded.
“Can I kiss you?”
She smiled.
The songs of cicadas had vanished.
She and I kissed for a while.
It was sweet, warm, but painful.
“Do you want to kill me?” she asked.
“No way,” I smiled.
“It’s a little bit hot.”
“Fall comes soon.”
“And winter comes soon, right?”
“Yes” I said.
We were being shook by swings like falling leaves.
A strong wind blowed.

THE REASON WHY MY HEART WAS BROKEN IN AUSTRALIA

Mizuki Sasaya

I remember the feeling when I went back to my apartment. I felt loneliness. If I say ‘tadaima’ (I’m home), no one answers. but I continued saying ‘tadaima’ until I left to make the place I could go back. I felt ‘I am lonely still.’

I remember I saw my boyfriend’s brother’s newborn baby. I felt a life. I can’t say how adorable she is. Her name is Kiko.

I remember when I arrived at the host family's house. I was really nervous because I couldn't speak English well and I couldn't understand most of what they were saying to me. But they welcomed me so much and gave me a nickname. That was 'Miskey.' It made my heart broken sweetly.

I remember when I saw stars and realized how beautiful stars in Australia are.

I remember I was reading a letter from my friend and cried a lot on the plane. At the time, my heart was filled with 99 percent sadness and 1 percent excitement. I was trying to think about exciting living in Australia, but I couldn't. I cried and cried. My heart was broken but I said to myself, 'I decided to go.'

I remember when I had a fever and had to stay in my room the whole day. I felt so lonely. I thought I wished I could go back to Japan right now.

I remember my heart was hurt to say goodbye to my boyfriend when I left Australia. We cried a lot. I felt how important he was in my life.

I remember every customer said to me, 'Hello' with a big smile and asked me, 'How are you.' And I answered, 'I'm pretty good thanks, you?' Also, one customer said to me, 'I like your shirt.' Those are just greetings and normal things for them. But it made me think, 'Here is where I want to live. This is what I wanted.'

I remember my host family gave me a whole Red Velvet cake and pie made from Australian Crystal on my 21st birthday in Australia. That was just one week after arriving in Australia. I didn't expect it at all. I was happy and cried. Every year, my parents celebrated me with my favorite food, hamburger and whole strawberry tart. My memory is stuck in my head and heart.

I remember my Korean friend wrote my name in Korean. She kept calling me 'Midyuki' because Korean doesn't have the 'zu' pronunciation. I thought how adorable she was.

I remember I thought, 'This is what I wanted' at language school. Everyone speaks English of course. They have different accents. We shared the cultures we have with each other in English. I was excited more than ever. My heart couldn't stop bumping.

I remember the first time I did a video call with my mom after leaving. I saw Mom's face and heard her voice. It made me cry a lot. For two weeks, every night I called and cried. My heart was broken by just a 'Hello' from Mom. Also, my heart was filled with warmth.

I remember I heard the sound of insects on the first night after moving to a shared house. That was a cockroach. From that day, every day, I killed cockroaches with screaming. Not one. Over 2. I really wanted to go back to Japan. I thought 'I can't live here anymore.' But whenever I went to language school, that feeling went far away.

I remember when I said 'goodbye' to my parents before leaving Japan. This is the second time I saw my dad cry so hard. The first time was when my grandfather died. My mom told me she had never seen my dad cry so much like he can't breathe because of tears. I remember I was heading to the flight gate hearing my dad's sound of crying. It hurt my heart.

I remember I saw the most beautiful beach ever at Noosa. Beautiful light and deep blue. I saw dolphins and whales as well. I forgot about everything and stared for a while.

I remember I walked around Brisbane City and handed in my resume to every store to get a job the whole day. None of the stores called me after. I can't count how many sheets I did. My heart was almost broken. After starting in 2023, I got one e-mail, and I got the job. I started working at Uniqlo Queen Street. My heart was filled with excitement for my future.

I remember I saw my parents again after I came back to Japan. We cried. But it was not sadness. It was happiness.

I remember I felt 'she is my best friend.' She is Minsun. She is from Korea. Our first language is different. But I could tell her how much I felt lonely and worried about everything in Australia. I never talked about this with someone except for my family. She just listened to me and stayed next to me. Now, she is my long-distance best friend.

I remember my boyfriend's face holding roses. It was not on the special day, just Sunday as always. My heart was filled with happiness. And I also felt, 'He is my happiness.'

I remember the feeling that the people who see off someone feel. That was terrible sadness. I felt when my best friend went back to Korea. My heart crashed so hard. At the same time, I thought my parents felt the same feeling when I left. I don't want them to feel that again, but I want to live in Australia. My heart is crushed again.

I remember one crew asked me 'Are you okay?' on the plane to go back to Japan. I was crying a lot. She gave me a heart-shaped chocolate.

I remember I got the first prize in the global competition at Uniqlo. I was one member of that team. That was about how beautiful we can make the store. I worked very hard every day, but not only working, 'working and communicating with co-workers and then, enjoying.' I felt, working is not a hard thing. working should be a part of my happy life.

I don't remember the hesitant feeling to try something new. Going to Australia was the new, and the biggest challenge of my life. I am glad I got that chance. I realized nothing is a waste to do in life. Now I remember the one feeling, 'be excited to try something new.'

I remember the first time I stayed at my boyfriend's house. I met his mom. She welcomed me. I stayed there several times. Then, his mom said to me 'Sweetheart.' My heart was broken. I felt, 'I am not lonely anymore.'

THE BAT CAT

Kota Yuasa

One day on a Halloween night
A man was drinking by moonlight
And saw a black cat by a lamppost
A most spooky one like a ghost

The cat was walking to him high
And looking at him with a warm sigh
With a little smile upon its face
And anger the man did embrace

The man said, "What's wrong with the cat?"
"What the heck are you laughing at?"
"Damn! Are you making fun of me?"
"I am going to make you pee!"

The bender gone too terribly mad
That he tried kicking the cat so bad
But failed and fell on to the ground
The cat did bolt with a horrid sound

His anger got out of control
He did round the bend like a troll
He chased the cat with might and main
Just wanting to give the cat pain

He chased the cat not to miss it
And did look for the cat by flit
He found the cat at the corner
Saw the cat become much bigger

Soon the man was about to run
But he soon knew that he was done
The cat did catch him like nothing
Tried to attack him by scratching

There was a woman standing there
The cat could not be seen nowhere
She was wearing a hat pulled down
And came so close to him with frown

She put her face to him saying
"You have done the cruelest thing"
"Now you have paid for it by pain"
The man fainted with fear in vain

He jumped out of his bed saying
"It was a dream of the worst thing"
When he got up with sigh of rest
Saw blood coming out of his chest

It is always better to foresee
Whatever reason it might be
Every time you do a bad thing
Karma befalls you at one fling

JOYCE AND THE SNAKE

Natsuki Oi

Inside a mansion there was Joyce,
Thinking her friend's birthday choice.
A perfect gift, she wished to find,
To match the one she had in mind.

"Wow! What's that?" A creepy sound,
Joyce turned, a snake she found.
"What's troubling you?" the snake said clear,
Joyce explained, her worries near.

Then Loki's prank, a cunning scheme,
"Cicada shells or eggs, a dream,
A bird's nest," he grinned with cheer,
"Special gifts, so sincere!"

Joyce surprised at advice so clear,
He said, "Ordinary gifts bring no cheer,
Choose the rare, delight will grow,
In unique gifts, friendship will glow."

Joyce heard Loki's words with care,
Frog eggs she chose, a gift so rare.
On her friend's day, in her grand hall,
A present she gave but heard friend's call.

"How dreadful!" her friend cried out,
Left Joyce in worry, full of doubt.
In shadows, snake found delight,
Laughing, vanished into night.

"Why wasn't my gift received well?"
Joyce wondered, her thoughts in a swell.
To Snake, she sought, but he was gone,
Realization then came upon.

The next day, Joyce, kind and bright,
Invited friends with hearts so light.
A floral crown, a gift just right,
Joy restored, their bond took flight.

WHITE WAR

Ayako Yotsubayashi

*For my grandfather, who loves and trust me to take over his story,
For my family, who loves me and raised me with full of love,
And for all victims who have suffered from wars and pains.*

"Ayako." Grandfather called my name.

"What's up? Grandpa," I replied.

"How old are you?" he asked.

It happened again. Grandfather came to often ask me my age these days. He is old that is hard to remember my grade and school name though we made a relationship as drinking buddy when I became twenty at last on this month. However, he has a very lucky hand that keeps his granddaughter's name. The more he drinks, the more my name runs over from his lip. His talk has a specific characteristic that starts calling my name first. It sounds like he tries to make certain his granddaughter is beside him anyway. It is his own way to calm down.

"I'm twenty as you know, Grandpa," I said, and laughed at him. However, he doesn't laugh. My doubtful eyes pierced him suspiciously. Because his eyes seemed to include sorrow and fear. It was the first time for me to see him like this.

"You are twenty. Well, you became the same age to 'that man'. I'm so glad to see you are alive till today."

"Grandpa. I don't know what you mean. You don't look happy at all. Who is 'that man?'" I asked him.

He didn't reply in a while but his mouth managed to utter one sentence. "I mean you are here because he saved me!"

At the moment, my vision suddenly became whiteout. The next moment, I stand on a white room. I see a boy who looks an elementary school student. A ruddy red face and two beautiful almond eyes, that's my grandfather! He stared at me for a while. After the silence, he formed one sentence.

"It's time to tell you, my story," he said. He looked like a little boy, but the voice was my grandfather's one I know well. I didn't understand what he would try to tell me. However, my heart was beating as if it commanded me to listen to him.

Suddenly, a fighter jet passed through the slight space between the boy and me. The object has a mark of star. I felt I've ever seen it many times in my life.

"Is that B-29?"

I never saw it in a textbook or documentary about war. However, its shape looks distorted unlike the one I've seen. It was because he was too old to project his memories in childhood, he looked like a child. Surprisingly, I didn't hear the noisy sounds of its gears at all. I was like I was watching a still image, but its eerie atmosphere that the jet emits into the room was realistic.

"I was just nine years old when the Pacific War ended. I can remember the day that happened in the summer of 1945 even now," he said sadly and continued the story.

I felt Grandfather's blank face softened for an instant, but I was sure his feelings included sorrow. I've never seen him like that. I didn't want him to feel sad. However, I didn't have the way to make him happy. While I'm confused, he stopped narrating and asked me a question.

"What I will tell you from now is not a comfortable thing. Which will you choose, listen or not?"

He has another characteristic in addition to starting conversation by calling my name. He makes his grandchildren choose their decisions themselves at each stage of ages. Perhaps, this moment is one of the stages where he tests whether my spirit is twenty or not. I found out it and said, "I will listen to your story." My strong willing eyes shot through his eyes. He seemed to accept the answer as yes and he started narrating his story again.

"One day, I was on the way home in the afternoon. At that time, students till third grade finished all classes before afternoon started. Since my family has taken over jobs as merchants, my dad often used to force me to help them. As I was quite a naughty boy, I always ran away from him. On that day, I dilly-dallied while walking back home as usual. I didn't feel fear about the attack from a B-29 then, but the moment I felt like that was slight until that jet came."

At that moment, scraps of papers scattered away around the room! They were not scraps, looking closely. They were B-29s, but they have different colors from each other, red, pink, purple, yellow, orange, blue... They all occurred over his head and the original one that appeared at first beside him followed them. I didn't know the reason, but I was like the one who looked scared of something.

"The crowd of B-29 suddenly appeared over my head at the next moment. I felt as if I was watching a picture describing the various colors of the sky. After the bullets burst, it looked like small, but beautiful fireworks. As I was impressed by the view, I didn't notice a B-29 tried to attack me. I thought it was too late when I noticed it."

His memories were all displayed in the room like a screen. I could see my great-grandfather's face who looked strict but had firm humanity to love his family, and his big brothers and little sisters playing with them, I was confused at once when I saw my young great-grandmother. She was very beautiful. By the way, I used to feel grandfather always cherished his mother till she died at the age of 107 when I met her for the first time at the age of six. I've also felt the same thing through mother and brother who was four older than me. Mother and son in this world have a special relationship. I wonder if I remember all my experiences and they will pass through my five senses when I die. I wonder if they will pass through my five senses like a revolving lantern someday.

"I just waited for the moment of my death and stared at the machine gun under the jet. I couldn't leave there, but the reason was not fear but I saw the pilot's face in that B-29," he uttered a groan. "I found he looked very young about twenty as you are now. A lot of feelings were occurring on his face, surprise, fears, sorrow, gentle..."

After he said the one word, he became silent again. I found he prepared himself to say the next thing. He was ready and said, "Eventually, he didn't shoot me. To be precise, he couldn't. He shot the ground around me because he wanted to show his allies in the other jets that he tried to kill me. After the impact of the earth shaking, I lost consciousness. At the same time, the jet and the pilot faded away into the fire of war. When I got consciousness again, I was at home, and I saw my father's face. It was like it was the first instant his face looked worried and was adorable for me. He told me all B-29s were shot down and crashed. There were no survivors."

His story ended in here. He seemed to tell me the later story anymore. However, the later story was displayed on the white wall again as his memories. I followed them in order. He didn't go to see the debris of the B-29 who saved him after all. Perhaps he could have said, "thank you for saving me," to that man. However, he couldn't. Because his spirit made himself scared of the nameless corpse exposed to be hurt in the rubble.

A tear dropped from that boy's face.

I asked, "Are you crying?"

He murmured. Unlike his narrating voice, the cry was a child's.

I thought that was a ridiculous question. However, I couldn't help saying anything to him because I don't want him to suffer from his past memories. It's true they mustn't be forgotten. However, I wanted him to be released from its hardships that has bound his spirit for 78 years.

That's why I chose...

"I promise you to take over the story. And instead of you, I will become a protector who keeps peace."

And I embraced him. At that moment, we were wrapped in a gentle light again. I felt he smiled slightly in my arm before we faded away from the room.

In the next moment, my vision came back to the living room from that white room. Grandfather has already slept. I couldn't see any hardships and pains in his face, but I didn't overlook a tear that wetted his lip. I whispered in his ears, "Thank you for becoming my grandpa."

After that day, I never saw grandfather's tears again. He cried for the first time through the tale of the B-29 and its pilot despite never showing his family any tears when his parents and his brothers died.

I saw an evening calm from the window. Its color was deeper orange than usual. Then, it was like I saw myself scorched with hellfire further away in my eyes. My body whose hands and feet are separated are dancing around the corpses and burned weapons that celebrate the breakdown of this world. In the view, I captured something evil looking at me and jeering. "Demons." I saw demons in my view.

They have killed enemies and snuck up on their corpses, continued destroying the earth for their cruel purposes. They never stop firing ten thousand enormous needles and they suck people's blood.

A hibakusha I met few years ago said, "There is neither fire nor do you hear the citizen's grudge in true hell. People hovering between life and death just lay on in the silence. If someone dies, it means his or her spirit became demon's immolation. In the end, its pulp and blood are all that's left."

My faded lips formed a poem slowly.

I heard the sounds of pieces of peace scatter away.

See me in its debris.

See me drowning in the sea.

From the dawn of good and ill, fighting and thundering.

From the hole made with crowds of clouds in evening calm.

Demons always looked at me.

Till I throw myself into its depth.

Evening came down. I noticed something sneaking up behind me. I spoke to and smiled at the demon in my shadow with ridicule. "Hello, dude. Son of a bitch! I will never follow you. Catch me if you can."

The demon slightly smiled with his fangs bared in darkness at the moment.

Noone knows how did it go after that. Because not only me but also you must make the ending yourself. Whether you struggle to protect all your beloved family and friends or you make this world with demons depends on you. I will never stop fighting with demons till I die. No matter if I lose my feet or my hands, my companions will take them on the road to the goal. I want to protect all my beloveds. It's a permanent promise made between three generations.

Dear Grandpa,

I'm writing a letter to you now at midnight. Please keep it secret in front of mom. If she notices that, this letter will end up with no romantic side! I've sent letters many times, but my arm grabbing the pen is shaking. Because it's the first time to write a love letter. I can imagine you will scream at me and say, "Is it a love letter? Are you out of your mind? You must send a love letter to only your beloved person!"

However, that's my idea that it is wrong to only send letters to boyfriends or girlfriends that are called "love letters." There isn't a common value in this world that I can whisper to a boyfriend my love, but I can do it for my family, right? I took over your stubborn character, so I don't intend on withdrawing my opinions. Ooops! This letter almost became my all complaints against you.

Let me confess my love to you, Grandpa. Thank you for becoming my beloved grandfather. As you have continued painting the story of your life since that day with Grandma and my mother, aunts, all people you love, I got a freedom of being a dream of my future and the right to feel excited about what will happen tomorrow. I mustn't forget the dream to drink beer with you, of course!

We don't know why the pilot in the B-29 didn't shoot you who were just nine years old even now. However, I think what we know it is just he who gave you a chance to make this world a good one. Our lives are gifts given by him; I don't intend on wasting my life.

I will be a protector who keeps peace in this world, and live as he protected you, so please call my name every day, "Ayako, Ayako, Ayako, Ayako." Whenever you call my name, I will be stronger and stronger.

Love,

Your beloved granddaughter, Ayako

THE BLAST SAUNA

Shuzo Kobayashi

A heat that I have never felt before hits my skin directly and shortly I was sweating a lot, not slowly. Like the moisture in my body wants to get out as soon as possible. The feelings that come up are passed on to the brain and feel a little bit more comfortable. Fight the feeling of wanting to get out and endure a little longer. After getting out of the sauna, I immediately take a cold bath and stretch myself. After that I sit on the beach outside and feel as if I can go to heaven. A steam coming off my body and my fingertips wrinkle like Umeboshi. My body and mind are refined and so they become a spiritual thing.

Near highway. Large old building surrounded by many factories. And the old sign-board has many kanji written on it. Are the words glowing in the dark, trying to draw us in like insects? Once inside, there are many posters with many benefits and introductions of Onsen. As I enter the changing room, I always see a row of massage chairs lined up to the left of its entrance. The room is dim, and everyone is lying limp on the chairs. They were made of soft material and some people closed their eyes while lying. My body was exhausted and wanted to lie there now, but I also felt excited at the same time. So, I shall go into the main bathroom.

When I entered the bathroom, the smell of medicinal herbs came to my nose. There were many baths, but only one bath was murky brown and had some kind of bag floating in it. I said to my friend, "What a mess." Most of the people here are elderly and comfortably bathed in hot water.

I decided to enter a sauna with a "Blast Löyly" which meant throwing water on hot stones and make hot wave for good feeling. The interior was made of wood and even if I touched the stairs, my skin didn't feel so hot. In the sauna room, there were people wearing hats made of towels, it looked like a bucket hat. One is wrapping towels around their waist. One was breathing heavily. The temperature in the room was about ninety degrees Celsius. The temperature was a little lower than in a typical sauna. Suddenly someone wearing clothes and having a bucket came into the room and started playing music. I heard that J-pop music about ten years ago. I was surprised that the person was a woman. "Women!?" I cried out in my mind. And I covered the waist area tightly with a towel. The woman wrapped a towel around her head and introduced herself. After the introduction, the men clapped for her. I was confused at that chaotic situation, but I got influenced by it and end up clapping my hands.

The woman with a bucket full of water tried to scoop it with something like a large spoon. After she threw water on the hot stones, a white haze of vapor rose up to the ceiling. My skin color turned red, and I sweated a lot. She left the hot room and soon returned with something in her hand. It was a machine for blowing and sweeping fallen leaves with the wind. She used it and started to hit the hot air against us. The first person who was exposed to the wind covered his nipples with his hands. Therefore, I decided to do it too. The hot wind hit my skin directly and I couldn't feel the streaming sweat. That is the "blast."

GHOST OF FART

Mayuka Sei

Tomboy Alice and Gentleman Nick
They have good hobbies for picnic
He is cool and a great cook
She loves to draw in her sketchbook

One couple in October eight
They spending wonderful date
At the museum to see artwork
Then to the park to take a walk

They had lunch time with potato
Focus the camera and take a photo
Lovely they enjoyed their date
For them this was a tricky gate

The time comes and the case starts
His patience runs out and he farts.
He fell silent for a moment
He had a hell of an accident

He farts a lot and repeating
She notice but she was cheating
She looks around, is there anything?
Maybe it's a Halloween ghost

Time passed, she had a bigger fart
Oh my gosh, and her pride hurt
Laughing very hard, they being analyst
In their bellies, they found the ghost

Their farts a little bit bad smelling
They were a little shy, still laughing
He said cause of potato we ate
Fart is hard to keep remote

Patient is bad for our health
We learned, it's our growth
Don't be shy to fart in front of people
Watch girl and boy in many angle

MY LIFE IS WITH SOCCER

Kensei Suzuki

I remember the first time I played soccer. The day I kicked the ball for the first time, ran around the field, and experienced the exhilaration of winning with my teammates.

I remember the day I played soccer all day, came home, and fell asleep exhausted.

I remember the day I won my first tournament. And the taste of the sushi I ate with my family to celebrate.

I remember the exhilaration I felt when I scored and the crowd cheering for me.

I remember the first time my father bought me spiked shoes. They were red Adidas shoes, one size larger so that they would fit even if I grew taller.

I remember the moment I knew about Lionel Messi and was captivated by his play. His play was like magic, and I felt a strong admiration for him.

I remember the sense of omnipotence I felt when I was at my best condition, as if I were no longer myself.

I don't want to remember. However, I vividly remember the last game of my junior high school soccer team. It was pouring rain that day. I remember clearly the vision blurred by the rain, the feel of the rough dirt ground, the sound of the whistle announcing the end of the game, the score of 2-4, and the indescribable feeling of a mixture of regret and satisfaction.

I remember when I had a ligament injury that took a year to heal. I remember feeling so much pain and feeling so hopeless.

I remember the first training camp I went to. It was my first experience spending time with friends. Although I have very fun memories of that experience, it was also a bit sad to be away from home for the first time.

I remember being appointed captain of my junior high school soccer team for the first time. There was a little bit of pressure and nervousness, but I was confident that I could do it.

I remember the taste of ramen called "Musashiya" that I used to go to with my friends on the way home from high school soccer team practice.

I remember the moment when I was separated from my teammates. As a young child, it was the first time I felt the loss of separation.

I remember bumping into my teammates for the win. There was no animosity there, and the dialogue was necessary because both parties had the same goal.

I remember the days of practice that were both fun and painful. There were times when I felt like giving up, but I kept going.

I remember the suffocating smell of sweat in the club room after practice.

I remember that my heart was rotting because I couldn't play soccer due to an injury. And I remember that I had friends and family who supported me even during times like these. Thanks to that, my heart didn't rot completely away.

I remember the last moments of my high school soccer team. I was seen off by my juniors and talked about our memories with my friends. Those days weren't just fun, but everyone there was smiling at that moment.

I remember when I passed the selection. I felt that my efforts had paid off, and that event gave me confidence.

I remember that we met again in high school with my teammates who had been separated from me in elementary school. The bond of soccer brought us together again.

I remember how happy the team I was rooting for won, as if it were my own. And that I shared that joy with my friends.

I don't remember the moment when I became friends with the people I met through soccer. Through soccer, even though I am not good at talking, I was able to connect with people. We became friends without even realizing it.

I remember how the view from the pitch changed as I grew older. Even so, the feeling of kicking the ball, running around the field, and winning with teammates remains the same.

EVERY TIME NEIL KNEELS DOWN

Kana Takahashi

Neil: Look, somebody dropped a pearl!

Appeal the Duck: Quack, quack (don't you dare pick that up. Somebody spit-ted that candy).

Neil: Is this a spirited candy? What happens if I eat it?

Neil: Hey, look! Is this a butterfly?

Appeal the Duck: Quack (no, that's just a fly).

Neil: Oh, jasperfly. That's why his eyes are twinkly red. I knew he was something special.

Neil: Look, Appeal. Ice cream!

Appeal the Duck: Quack (That's my butt, you fool).

Neil: Oh, I love you too!



LIVE LIFE OUT LOUD

Ayako Yotsubayashi

My good friend, who is today's host, read Matthew Chapter 7. I find that I've lived with my heart, always looking for something, and followed this chapter. I didn't notice it in my childhood, of course. Because I used to be a girl who didn't have any faith to my God as I mentioned last spring semester. Actually, I was a bullied girl, and it was hard to get self-confidence until I graduated from junior high school. Because cruel words that denied and never accepted me dominated my heart as if it were true. Children understand what advantage is as well as adults although they look very young seemingly. So, their world is filled with discrimination and inequalities. However, I found myself who managed to win something desperately when I was a child in even a vicious world.

I think the moment the feeling grew up was born from a nasty desire that wants to feel a sense of superiority. Because bullied children are paranoid creatures who guess they are the only ones who are unhappy. In particular, I used to be a girl who considered myself a heroine in my life because I was a bookworm. For example, I had an opportunity to apply for a Yagi Jyukiti poetry contest when I was a fourth-year student in elementary school. He was a poet who graduated from my old school. I can remember the poem I wrote at that time clearly.

The title was "A Swirl in My Heart." The swirl was a metaphor that posed my dark days without friends that never ended and expressed a sense that I was dragged into it. The poem never ended with a happy ending, and what I expressed at that time is that I managed to be alive day by day. However, the work was never accepted by anyone. I noticed a thing through the result. It is that I had made a big mistake that I could get sympathy from people around me if I act like a heroine in a tragedy who struggles to win happiness. However, the situation never changes if I just get sympathy from others. In other words, it means I would never win good friends and a great relationship with them. I've longed for a long time unless I stop it.

After I noticed it, I started to think about what I should do to change the situation and concentrate on bringing out my impressions. In particular, learning from characters in my favorite books is one of my impressive practices.

Everyone, thank you so much for everything. And I hope our friendship will be a good one forever and ever. Meeting all of you changed my life. Everyone answered my looking for a way to be happy in affirmation. I feel the fun of being because of everyone. I appreciate everyone with all my heart. I've loved reading foreign literature such as,

“Anne of Green Gables” written by Lucy Maud Montgomery and “Daddy Long Legs” by Jean Webster. Anne and Judy, who are the heroines of these books, make their lives themselves with their wealthy imagination and positive characters. Through them, I came to hope to live with strong beliefs like them and find the way to become an impressive girl.

What I found as a result was to learn a lot of things. If I find what I like to learn, it will be a strong part of myself. Finally, I started to study English. At that time, I disliked English so much. However, I noticed that I could gain self-confidence if I love foreign literature and movies. Having been looking for the future all along since then, I’ve lived until now. It is true that the journey was not always peaceful, but I became a MeiGaku student. Finally, my dream of meeting great companions came true after I came here and got faith in my God.

The more I touch my friend’s warmth, which is a gift from my God, with my hands, the more I come to be honest with my feelings. At the same time, I also hoped to cherish my life where there are many friends who love me. However, it takes much time to learn how you should cherish yourself more than you expect. I’ve already learned human foolishness that suddenly breaks itself at the moment. But my God taught me a thing through the life he gave me. It is that I’m allowed by him to continue chasing something in my life. Going after family or friends, boyfriend or girlfriend, goal of lives every day, we live and live, decide one of given choices in various situations. If we gave up looking for something to win happiness, we would lose the purpose of our life and die soon. Our God knows that human life is transitory like that, so he allowed me to live a life that is a permanent journey to continue asking a question to find the way to be happy.

Before I knew it, the view I’ve watched for a long time has already changed. The view I can see now is one where warm sunlight comes into my life, though the winter season is coming. The sunlight gives me the confidence to overcome my hardships even though something cruel happens someday. It was never wasteful that I continued struggling desperately with my eyes running tears under the dark cloud that never seemed to clear up. As proof that proves it, I noticed a thing through this year. It is that I came to be able to face the hometown I was born in again through a part-time job. There are many people who have a strong passion for their hometown in this region, so I often see former classmates who came to my supermarket as a customer. However, I will never feel any strong hatred and sorrow against them anymore. Although I will never like them as my friends, I respect them as persons. Because My God loves them. And I rather hope that they will get many gifts from my God than I hate them till I die.

Right now, I don't need to be a slave of my past anymore. What I should do now is just enjoy my life for my future filled with sunshine. I've wanted to prove it today in front of everyone. Next year, I will be a senior of English Department and belong to MCM on Shirokane Campus. So, it means that I might not tell everyone the story of my life anymore on the Yokohama campus, though I might sometimes go there. For this reason, I decided to stand here again to say my appreciation to all the people I met.

Everyone, thank you so much for everything. And I hope our friendship will be kept forever. What I met everyone, it changed my life. You acknowledged my life to continue asking something to my God. I'm so happy about being alive now because of you. I never forget this appreciation to everyone.

Please let me pray.

Our kind and gracious heavenly father

I thank you for giving me time to tell students and teachers my story again here.

I also thank thee for always leading us to where we should belong.

We often face hardships in various situations in our lives, but we believe thee are always waiting for us with great life gifts.

Please bless us as we learn so that we may be taught by thy guidance.

We say these things in the name of thine only begotten son Jesus Christ, Amen.

(Originally read in English Chapel hour on
Yokohama Campus November 22, 2023.)

EDITORS AND ADVISORS COMMENTS

We're feeling now CROP 2023 will be a brilliant one. Editing each works, we noticed that most of the writers described their experiences. Each of them became a story through many forms of literature; that is, they became protagonists. What an insight that is! We often forget we are heroes or heroines of our own lives. We have a very lucky chance to have an opportunity to express that through writing. Also, looking at someone's life through works is really fun because they give us a chance to challenge something new, right? We hope everyone's work stimulates MeiGaku students to make their lives good ones.

FROM THE EDITORS

Every year, the writing for CROP keeps getting stronger, and it was strong to begin with. Students are just as creative as ever and maybe more. Was that the result of Covid? Or is it because of smartphones? Or is the inner creativity of students just expressing itself more easily these days? Whatever the reason is, it's working. The CROP works this year show a lot of different styles, poetry, visual poetry, short stories, speeches, essays, and prose poems, but in all of them, students bravely opened their hearts for us to see. It seems true that human work in the past was about the body, building things, laboring by hand, and working with solid materials. And maybe in our age, work is about the mind, using the computer, AI, messages, and information. But I guess future work will be about the heart, about knowing what one feels and how others feel, and about being able to express the subtlety, softness, and dynamism of humanity. If so, the heart inside this year's CROP works looks to the future. Maybe the future, like these writings, will be based on greater emotionality, sensitivity, generosity, and understanding. That's what I found when I read these, and I hope you find that too as you read these—and re-read them—and I'm sure you will. Enjoy reading! I did.

Michael Pronko
CROP Advisor

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CROP

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS



～作品募集中～

Let's Share Our Experiences, Feelings, Memories and Ideas!

We want to assemble your creative English skills to make a special publication.

Poems, Lyrics, Reviews (Films or TV series), Short Stories, Dramas or Your Thoughts
are what we want from you.

英語で、詩・歌詞・レビュー（映画やドラマ）・ショートストーリー・物語
の脚本・皆さんの気持ち

を書いた作品を集め、毎年一つの本にしています。

CROPで「一つのすてきな本」を創り上げませんか？

読む・書く・話すを楽しみながら、独自の表現を共有しよう！

↓ 作品応募はこちらへ ↓

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We carry within us
the wonders we seek
around us.

—Sir Thomas Browne

Greatness
lies not in
being strong,
but in the
right using
of strength.

—Henry Ward
Beecher

Life is worth living
as long as there's
a laugh in it.

—Anne of the
Green Gables

To thine
own self
be true.

—William Shakespeare

Be yourself,
everyone else is
already taken.

—Oscar Wilde