

CROP

volume four

EDITORIAL

Karen Yoshino (Editor, CROP 4)

Quite a few people have experienced casting doubt on themselves, and asking, 'Am I really a literature student?' The answer should be, absolutely, 'YES!' However students, including potential writers, tend to lose their own passion in a flow of hectic part-time jobs, club activities, and job hunting. To help us find our own passion and explore our capabilities, we are running this university journal: CROP.

Honestly, I was one of those 'drowning' students in that flow of college life. Seriously, my only motivation was how much money I could gain from a part-time job every month. Sounds stupid, and they were quite stupid days. A year and a half as a college student passed, until, finally, I wondered to myself, 'What the hell am I doing here? Am I even a student...?' Next month, I quit the job and applied for the study abroad program. Fortunately I got an acceptance, and a chance to get out from under my old self.

A second opportunity arrived last summer when I took part in the first CROP meeting. Since I got there right after overseas study, almost no members could recognize me. Moreover I've never worked as an editor before. Everyone looks amazingly genius... Although the old me urged escape from the opportunity, I finally made the decision to devote myself to CROP.

Maintaining an organization is not as easy as you might expect. Especially if you believe you are the only person who can overcome the problems in the group. Fortunately, some great members gathered this year (I think the present members are the best team ever!). Whenever I was in trouble, other members made a great contribution. Although the juniors must have been busy with their job hunting, they spared abundant time and energy to make advertising, distribute information, and check submissions. Tomomi, the senior editor, always supported me in organizing the schedule. Our professors, Dr. Paul, and Dr. Michael, lead us to the right way to publish this journal successfully. Thanks to all the cooperation, more than double the number of works received last year came in from a group of highly motivated new writers.

I don't rush you immediately towards study overseas. (I'm not an agent of 'Ryugaku-Journal'!) But I do rush you into something by which you can explore your capability and gain your own satisfaction. I believe CROP can open your eyes and lead you into a much more broadened world.

Let's remember the words of Mark Twain: 'Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn't do than by the ones you did. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover.'

A BEAUTIFUL BOUNTIFUL CROP

Paul Hullah & Michael Pronko (Executive Editors, CROP 4)

From where do poems, stories, and essays come? How are they nurtured and grown? Why does language endlessly captivate us with its creative power? This year's CROP offers some excellent, plausible responses to these nagging mysteries. CROP 4 is yet another bountiful, healthy, and meaningful harvest.

As you are reading the many marvelous works here, try to ponder another question: Why is the creative side of language so often excluded from schools? Those who work with English — teaching it, learning it, writing it, speaking it, or reading it — are prone to forget how exhilarating and inspiring it is just to enjoy the beauty, the meaning, the music, and the energy of living language. Fortunately, the writers in this year's CROP do not forget the creative side of English; they embrace it and they use it, with passion and with style.

Beyond tests and exams and assignments, beyond linguistic theories and job qualifications, working with and in English can be a great big pleasure. All the students who work so willingly on CROP know how important it is to really 'own' the language, to make it a part of one's life. English is more than a set of rules or memorized words hauled out to pass another tricky test, impress an employer, or use on vacation. The writers and editors of CROP know that English should be personalized, focused, sensuous, empowering, and very, very freeing.

You, dear readers, will also be experiencing English — suggestive, emotive, carefully-expressed English: '*literary*' English, for want of a better adjective — in the following pages. You'll have to read by feeling, understanding, and thinking at different and deeper levels. As you read, let yourself enter the stories, poems, and essays. Linger and play inside the language awhile. You will find this to be a powerful experience. Let yourself connect to the writers, think about what they say, feel what they feel, see what they see, and experience what the writers themselves experienced. If you do this, you'll have a new view of what it means to know English and know the stunning and spectacular patterns into which it can be shaped.

Working on CROP is a very special experience for everyone involved. Thanks go to the writers, editors, staff, the English Department, and Meiji Gakuin University for helping these students create another special edition of this special journal. It reminds us once again that only by educating others can you really educate yourself. So, truly, thanks to everyone who participated in this unique process of learning, growing, and creating. Enjoy the beautiful harvest.

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A Theater

During
a performance
on a stage,
a man
in the audience
stood up. He did not move,
just standing up. Then a man
behind said, 'Sit down please.'
The man apologized to the man
behind obediently, 'Sorry.' And
he sat down. However, the man
stood up again in a few minutes.
A man behind said, 'Hey.' The
man apologized to the man
behind, 'Sorry.' And he sat
down. However, before this
play reached its climax,
the man stood up again
suddenly. The man
behind became
impatient and
shouted at him,
'Stop it! What
do you want to
do?!' The man
said, 'Sorry,
I only wanted to
check that you are
really watching this show.'

Mika Nishi

The War that I Heard from My Grandmother

My grandmother is 81 years old. She was born in 1931 in Tokyo. As she lives in the city of Kawasaki where I also live, I often visit her house. Although she will be 82 years old this year, she is very fine and fashionable. I love her, so I want her to live lively forever. Whenever I meet her, we enjoy talking about various things. We talk about reading, which is our common hobby, and the daily events.

Because she is knowledgeable, she always teaches me things. For example, she teaches me the names of flowers and the language of flowers when we take a walk together. I like her stories. Especially, I like her reminiscences. Through her reminiscences, I can know the times she has lived, and my roots. The stories that my grandmother tells me, such as the stories of her childhood memories, are great fun to listen to. However, there was only one sad story. It was the story of the war. Since I was a child, my grandmother has talked to me about the war she experienced.

One summer day, I went to stay in her house. That day, August 15, was the anniversary of the end of the war. When the television was turned on in the morning, the memorial service for the war dead was broadcast.

Then, she said, 'When the war ended, I was 14 years old: the same as you. I sat straight together with others and heard the *Gyokuon* broadcast in which the Emperor Showa declared the end of the war. After I heard it, I was full of all sadness and regrettable feelings. 'There were some people who were crying. I couldn't believe that Japan had been defeated. You are happy because you are born in the world without war.'

After I heard that, I felt thankful to have been born in a peaceful country without war.

And my grandmother went on. 'My older brother was a member of the special attack corps. If the end of the war had been later, he would have died. The war is a terrible thing because it took the lives of the people and their dreams. I had begun to learn English at school before the war began but, after war began, using foreign languages was forbidden. So, I was not able to continue to learn English. Moreover, we were taught that Americans and British were demons by our teachers and our parents.'

After hearing her story, I thought about the life and the hope of people that war took away, and I became very sad. And I asked my grandmother about life during that time.

She said, 'Because the war situation turned worse, my family evacuated to Niigata. We dug an air-raid shelter to hide in when an air-raid alarm sounded. At school, I was made to do labor services rather than study. We did needlework for the military in a gymnasium. There was nothing to much eat, so I and my friends brought lunch of rice and a pickled plum.'

Then, I asked her, 'Didn't you complain and feel anxious about the war?' And she answered, 'I did not. If we had complaints and fears, we couldn't say. Because the whole nation devoted its energies to Japan, we believed that Japan would surely win. In addition, we were told that we could attack enemies with bamboo spears, so we practiced hard. Now I look back on that time, I think that it was strange and helpless. We regarded the Emperor as God and we had to bow towards the direction of the Imperial Palace. When I retrace that time, I think that Japan in wartime resembles present-day North Korea.'

After hearing her talk, I was surprised at what sounded like brainwashing, and I feared that the war had deprived many people of their freedom.

So I was able to know the life of Japanese people under World War II through the story of my grandmother. In addition, I could understand that today's peace consists of sorrows and sacrifices of a former war. Unfortunately, the number of people who experienced the war decreases little by little. So I think that it is valuable to listen to the story of the war from them. Surprisingly, there are some young people who don't know about World War II or that atomic bombs were

dropped on Nagasaki and Hiroshima. If the number of people who know the fear of the war decreases, the same mistake may be repeated again. Therefore I think that it is important to listen to stories about the war. Of course, I think that there are people who don't want to talk about wartime experience, but by hearing a story of the war from them, we can know our roots and feel thankfully connected to our ancestors. That is to say, if my grandparents hadn't been born, my parents and I wouldn't have been born. That is why I want to hand down the story that I heard from my grandmother to the to my children and my grandchildren if I have them. It is necessary to hand down the story of the war from generation to generation.

A Ray in the Dark

Winter 1993. A woman cries in a hospital, and in silence. A baby's cry answers. Some say that it was a cruel experience; others say it was a supreme gift from a great female. She was my mother. Since I was born, she has been giving me all of what she has. That is essential for me to be a person who has fortitude, humility, and know value of cherishing oneself.

When I was a child, every time I was in trouble I would not face difficulties with courage. As I got into complicated situations I felt like I was in a completely black prison all the time. I could see nothing and was just scared about what would lie before me. Then a light came into my mind. It was from my mother. I was told by her, 'Even if you face lots of difficulties, you must never turn your back on them. If you overcome them, you will be able to broaden your horizons. You can have anything of your own.' She was earnestly encouraging me to be braver and not to give in to anything, whatever happened to me. On such an occasion, I realized she was always by my side. I felt very relieved as if I was an innocent child running on the green, soft, and scented grass after a ball. Then I found it so important to be fortitudinous toward adversities, which would enable me to be successful.

As I grew older, however, I came to be conceited of my own skills. Just after I was able to flourish in a soccer game, I had so much confidence in myself. What did the conceit bring about? Nothing. And, she said, 'A conceit can deteriorate one's personal quality. It leads to a person behaving as if he were a dictator, in an empire where so many people feel depressed, with their blood running.' Thanks to her telling me that, I found I was really wrong. So, I have been making it a rule to be always humble.

Although I found it valuable to have humility, something complicated was in my mind. It was being the same as others. Everyone around me in high school wanted to be somebody famous. Of course, I used to be the same as others.

Especially, when it came to making friends, I tended to think carefully about who was famous and popular in my high school, and I would choose those persons. Yet, then, my mother told me, 'Hiding our true self cannot benefit us at all. It is to free your true self that really counts. You say, "Here I am, and I am the only one."' I realized that nothing could be more special than true self. She has led me to that person for whom I really was longing.

Without her, I couldn't have realized I was surrounded by true love, or be what I am now. Every time I was in trouble, she braced me up, and made me find that all I had to do was have faith in what I had done and in everything in me. I promise, no matter what happens to me, I have her in mind. She is a ray in the dark.

Kanako Hayashi

An Autumn Leave

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Pigsty

I had pigs. There were a lot of pigs in a pigsty near my house. I had worked in a city, but I had been so tired of urban life that I had quit my job, in spite of it being a well-paid job, and had come here. Here was no boss finding fault with everything I did and to whom I had to apologize, though I had no responsibility for problems. Here was no hustle and bustle, which tired me out. Here was no need to keep conversation going by speaking ill of others. Here was enough time to find the beauty of nature.

I felt that living here was just as human beings should do. There were comparatively many choices of job in this rural place, and I decided to work as a pig farmer, which wasn't good pay. This was because I loved the phrase: 'It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied.' Having and watching my pigs would give me the motivation to have such a thoughtful and discreet life as we ought to. My wife had such a sweet understanding of my quality and such a strict obedience to me that she agreed with me, but she seemed to have a kind of worry about me.

It was a rainy day. I felt very sick, but had to feed my pigs. I would ask my wife to do so instead of me, but unluckily for me she had gone out. The pigs munched animal food, smiling and expressing thanks for my feeding. This made me irritated because of my illness. 'How dare you laugh at me!' I kicked one of the pigs. It didn't get angry, of course. My wife saw this scene as she was coming back home, but strangely she said nothing.

The next day, I quarreled with my wife over a trivial thing. There seemed to me no reason for her rage, but she was angry. Had I done something to give her a temper? The next day, she was still angry. I spoke to her but she took no more attention of me than if I hadn't been there, and the next day she was also angry. She wasn't perhaps truly angry, more as if she intended to be angry, or maybe she was worried about me, I was not certain. I told the pigs about my wife and they

answered smiling, and I laughed too. The next day, I woke up to find my wife had gone out somewhere. She might return in a couple of days: there was no good worrying about this. I talked with my pigs of myself and of her running away. It was fun. The next day there was a storm, so I couldn't go and clean the pigsty. It was sad to be unable to have any talk with the pigs. The next day, the pigsty stank with pig dung, but this didn't offend me. If they gave me pleasure, I would endure almost everything I could.

That night, I slept in the pigsty. The voices of the pigs relieved me from my loneliness, and sadness. Sadness? What kind of sadness had I? Then the phrase occurred to me again: 'It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied...' The pigs ate food while I lived alone without my wife, as if the pigs were the king of a castle devouring as much food as they wanted, and I a loyal servant who helped with every scene of life in the castle, even with the king's excretions. I thought I was superior to the pigs, but actually I wasn't. I was a human being, so wasn't I automatically higher than them? No. So did I keep myself comparing me with them?

I ran out of the pigsty, into my home. I took the shotgun that was in my closet. I returned to the pigs, and I killed them all. Their heads, exploding all around, were still laughing at me. I was about to kick one when I stopped.

An Important Thing

Basketball changed my thoughts and I learned an important thing through it. I think basketball is a good sport for everyone to learn about teamwork. When I was a high school student I belonged to the basketball club. This basketball club was known for its rigorous training. We hardly had a holiday and practiced very strictly. I was a captain so I had to lead my team members. First of all, I could not deal with my team members easily and did not understand work as a captain very well. Because of it, my team lacked unity, but I didn't know what I should do. I'm not good at bringing my team members together. Then, I believed that an individual ability is necessary for a strong team, and the team that has skillful players is really strong. However, it was different.

One day, we played a game for the first time with another team. We could not pass the ball skillfully and we did not raise our voices because we did not know each other very well. Our team had skillful players but we could not play basketball smoothly. I thought that it was not long since we formed a team so the cause of these happenings was lack of practice, but the most causal influence was poor team work. After the game, I suggested to my team members, 'Shall we all go to a restaurant tonight?' Most team members said 'All right!' and so we went. We talked a lot about hobbies, favorite singers, and where we live, and we were able to know much more about each other than before. The next day, we played a basketball game much better than on the day before. I was very surprised and happy. The team accomplished more than was expected. I overcame my weakness and brought my teammates together. Through such experience, we learned that we must work together to win, and I also learned basketball needs not only individual abilities but also teamwork. We can't be a strong team only through hard practice. The team members have to get along with each other and know each other deeply.

Also, I think this is important for us to become a working member of society, because office work is just like team sports. I want to belong to the planning section. I think planning section needs teamwork because we divide a group and exchange thoughts, and work toward our goal. To accomplish something, it is very important to work together with others. I showed leadership after I took up my post as captain. I think thanks to basketball, I could take the lead. I feel certain that the lesson through my experience as a basketball player is very useful to do work.

Finally, I learned that teamwork is necessary for team sports such as baseball, soccer, volleyball, and basketball. I think the team that exhibits teamwork is a strong team. Also, I knew the importance of a state of cooperation. We are tied firmly by bonds of friendship that will remain unchanged. Basketball taught me an important lesson like this and I will keep it in mind forever.

Christmas Night

'Wow! Look! Look! The outside is all white!'

In the morning of Christmas, Peter has shouted. Christmas is important day for Peter and others. It is likely to become good and snowy today. Mary and Nick have come down stairs, hearing Peter.

They are going to go to buy a fir tree. And they will ornament it, in order to make a Christmas tree. Naturally, they also expect to put presents under the tree.

Peter, Mary, and Nick brought the saving box from their room to buy a Christmas tree. When their money was put together, it added up to 150 dollars. 'We can buy a big tree!' Mary said.

Nick was chosen to buy a big Christmas tree. He went to town. The town was crowded with people. A man who had a violin was standing under the streetlight. There was an overturned hat at his feet. 'I think that all people should be happy at Christmas. Have a nice day!' Nick said, and he put money into the hat.

Nick began to walk to the Christmas tree shop again. When he rounded the corner, an old man was standing there. He had a board. On the board was written: 'There are many unfortunate children who can't experience the happiness of Christmas in the world. Please give money to the children.' Nick put money into the can beside the old man. The old man smiled.

When Nick arrived at the Christmas tree shop, he noticed a serious thing. In his wallet only 20 dollars remained. He was able to buy only a very little Christmas tree. He went home disappointed.

When he got home, Nick couldn't please everybody. Nick talked about the two men. Mary and Peter didn't get angry. 'Nick did a good thing so I can't blame him,' Mary said. Then there was a knock on at the door. Peter opened the door, but there was no one. An envelope had been placed on the doorstep. A map was contained in the envelope. They decided to follow the directions written on the map.

The map pointed in the direction of a forest. It was snowing more heavily than before. When they arrived at the spot indicated on the map, they were surprised. Because there was a huge Christmas tree, beautifully ornamented. Nick noticed that a key was hanging on the tree. 'There is a house over there with smoke coming out from the chimney!' Peter said.

They went to the house and opened the door with the key. When they opened the door, an old man who wore a red costume was standing there. 'I appreciate Nick's good deeds,' the man said. Nick noticed something. It was the old man that he had given money to at the street corner. He was Santa Claus.

After that they all spent a wonderful Christmas in Santa Claus's house.

Do You Notice Who You Are?

'Wake up! Wake up!' Mia was gotten up by the voice. 'Erm...Yes, Yes.' She answered the voice and got up from her bed. She looked around her, but there was no one there. 'What was it?' she said and continued, 'That's OK. I'm in here.' She always talks to herself because she is living alone. 'By the way, what shall I do today? Oh! Today is my birthday. I invited my friends for a party. I'm going to prepare for that.' She started to clean her room and cook some dishes in a routine way. She is a wise person. 'I wish I had long hair. I look good in a dress.'

'Wake up! Wake up!' Petty was gotten up by the voice. 'Oh! Is it already that time? I have to hurry! I'll be late for the party.' Petty is a careless person who needs much time to dress. She gave water to a plant that grew up about the height of her shoulder. 'I can't find my watch! Where is it?' Her room is in a mess, a symbol of her character. 'By the way, who woke me up?'

'Wake up! Wake up!' Done was gotten up by the voice. 'Just one second, please!' the student said and was about to go to sleep again. 'Wake up!' a shout reached his ears. 'Yeah, I know. I'll get up. I'm going to a party today.' Looking in the mirror he checked his hair and face. 'Good, but would I suit shorter hair? Uh...I want to sleep more.' They were like a child's words. 'Who woke me up?'

That afternoon, Mia waited for her friends, but no one came and congratulated her. 'Why does no one come here? I looked forward to this party.' She was sad and cried. After few hours, Mia's mother came to her. 'Congratulations, Mia. I came here for you!' She entered Mia's house, but Mia was not there. She found three phones that seem to be all Mia's. 'Why three phones? It's too many for one person.' She checked the mailbox of a phone. The name 'Done' was registered as sender. While she was feeling strange, the door opened. She looked up. Mia was there. 'Mia! What's up?' she said, and waited for an answer.

'Oh! Mia's mother! I'm Petty. Did you forget me? How's it going?'

Kazuki Monzen

For Myself

When I was a child
I saw a universe in my head

Closing my eyes
All of the stars
Scattering in that world
Seem to shine out for me

As I grew up
These stars gradually faded

Where have you gone?

I found the one
She had been waiting
Until we had met

I've been longing for this time for ever

When I found her
My life has started

Marina Kamo

Akaremon

I have precious friends in the University. My friends and I get along well. We are called 'akaremon'. It is composed of the first sound of our names: 'a' is Aiko's a, 'ka' is Kamo's ka, 're' is Rachel's re, 'mo' is Momoko's mo, and 'n' is Marin's n. Kamo and Marin is the same. It is me. So, 'akaremon' is made up of four girls. We belong to the same circle, E.S.S.

One of them is a positive and cheerful girl. She is Momoko. I call her Momochi. Both she and I live alone in Totsuka and my room is close to Momochi's. We often spend time together: eating dinner at the students' dining hall or my place, going shopping, doing our assignments, for example. Sometimes she comes to my house late at night and she does her report all night. So I know her well. Actually, she belonged to a Cheerleader club in high school. I think the club suited her well because her smile is very cute. She says everything she thinks and wants to say. She often says, 'It is hot!' 'I'm hungry!' 'That is good but this is bad!' I can't say these things clearly, so I envy her. Moreover, we often talk about love. We cheer up and advise each other. The time when we talk about love is my favorite time.

'Akaremon' members gave me a new experience that I hadn't expected. Last spring vacation, we went to Italy for six days! It was my first time abroad. I never dreamed that my first trip to a foreign country would be to Italy and with 'akaremon'. The trip made me positive and active. Actually, I decide to go to the UK to study English because I became interested in going abroad because of our trip. Thanks to 'akaremon', my university life has new value.

Mika Nishi

The Season

Towns start to dress special season.

White dress, red dress, green dress, blue dress, yellow dress with twinkling
accessory.

Towns' brightness is different from usual.

My English History

Those who are learning English have their own English History. Some people might be born in an English-speaking country and some might start to learn the language later, typically in junior high school. I am of the latter group.

In my elementary school, I didn't like the English conversation classes with a foreign teacher, because I had no idea what he said and it was no fun at all. It was Mrs. Sato who taught me English when I was in the first grade of junior high school, and I became definitely fascinated to learn the language. I still remember that I was always having fun in the classes and gradually becoming more interested in the language. We often sang songs and played in English together and it was apparent that she was enjoying teaching us. Sometimes she showed us e-mails in English from her foreign friends, and, as I took her classes, I felt as if my world was expanding through learning. It was because of her that I became fascinated by the language and, at the same time, I wanted to be just like her.

After I graduated from the junior high school, I went to Australia for two weeks and stayed there with a host family. It was my first trip overseas and I was impressed by cultural differences. However, I could not understand what people said and I couldn't speak English well. In fact, I did not try to speak because of my poor grasp of the language. That remains my biggest regret in life. I should have tried to speak up, been more active, even though I might have made mistakes.

This experience taught me the significance of speaking out and being active. So, after I came back from Australia, I studied English harder and tried to take part in many activities. Since that time, one of my goals has become to go abroad again and become a better English speaker.

After I graduated from high school, I joined an English circle in my university, and this summer I went to America to study at Hope College for about a month. While I was in the U.S., I had a few chances to talk about my future with a Japanese professor who was working there. I have been thinking whether I should

be a teacher or not, and I wanted to talk about this with him. He advised me, 'If you have just a little interest to teach English, I think you should be a teacher, because if not, you will be an office worker who will always regret not becoming a teacher.'

When I heard this, the word, 'regret' reminded me of my biggest regret in high school. When I imagined my future, I didn't want to regret anymore. It was as if his words showed me the way that I should step forward. Now I'm trying even harder to improve my English for an overseas program. All I need now is experience in foreign countries. I would like to learn more about different systems of education in order to become a flexible English teacher.

This is how my English History pages keep turning over. Though I am neither a returnee nor one of those who have stayed overseas for more than a year, I don't want to stop learning the language, since I know how interesting it is. What about your history?

Ishita Hikono

My Favorite Month

Nostalgic feeling

Oh, there are only two months left this year!

Very cold days

Early sunset

Many precious people's birthdays in this month

Beautiful starlit sky

Every day I drink hot tea or coffee in this month

Red fallen leaves make red carpet on the street

My Strange Adolescence

I am a very odd person. Because unlike some of my readers fed up with their fathers, I have never experienced a rebellious stage. I think the reason is I have been assisted by my dad and appreciated my father since I was born. My father is in my hometown, which is far from Kanagawa, with my mother. He is a strict man compared to fathers in general. His works as a programmer. He commutes to Tokyo from my hometown Nagano by Shinkansen. Therefore he is very busy and probably tired. From such a daddy, I have been given countless devotion. He is the proud father of me: a superman, and a teacher.

When I was a child, my father took my family on trips many times in each vacation regardless of how busy he was. Mostly, he was driving. I sat behind him, my mother was next to him, and my older sister was on my left side. It was our family's usual shape. When the sun rose, he always played Southern All Stars in the car. The sunshine came into my eyes and I woke up due to the music. It was my little happiness. That song is still my favorite song. While we enjoyed the trip, he took large numbers of photos of us. He kept each event not only just as a memory, but also as photos in order for it to remain no matter how many years have passed. He thought and did a lot of things for my family at all times.

I was in trouble about breaking my computer and told my dad who had just come back from his job. Although he was very tired, he was willing to fix it for me in his short free time. Since I was born, when I have been in trouble, he has surely helped me out like a superman. Once my favorite game was soaked in water and out of order, so I was very depressed like a flagging flower. At that time, my father resolved the components and fixed it for me taking a lot of his time. He did anything that he could for others.

Our family has always lived with animals. When I was eight, I wanted to breed a hamster. He objected to my having one but anyway I wanted it. Finally, I got a hamster after giving a lot of promises and my oath. At first, I changed the water

and hay, but, gradually, I neglected that work. One day, my father scolded me and told me how important my role was. 'For the hamster, since you got him, only you are the mother who takes care of him.' I was very impressed. Then I came to take care of him. Years later, he passed away. My daddy made a grave near our ancestors' graves. Every time I go, I put flowers and sunflower seeds on it even now. He wanted to teach me the importance of life through keeping my own pet.

My father is my tutor in all of my life. He taught me a lot of things so that I would become a kind person in the future. In return for his affection, I will save my money, and I'll take him on a trip, with me driving, in the future, playing Southern All Stars in a car.

Nagisa Komon

Mollie Anderson

I have been interested in English since I was a child. So I wanted to go to study abroad. I had thought of going to the USA. I wanted to experience a culture different from Japan, and I wanted to live with the family of a foreign country. Finally, I went to study abroad by myself four years ago. This is the circumstance in which I met Mollie Anderson and her family.

This experience is important to me, because if I hadn't gone there, I wouldn't have chosen the Department of English Literature in University. This experience gave me confidence when I was 17, because I was shy. On the other hand, I was interested in doing English study abroad. Therefore I decided to go abroad. I chose one course from a list of lots of courses. I contacted the study abroad program by myself. I selected the host family plan. I had to do everything by myself. This is the first step toward self-help. Gradually, I became confident of myself.

When I arrived at my host family's home, they welcomed me warmly. I was tired after a long flight, but I could relax. They were very kind. The family consisted of a mother, two sisters, one brother, three dogs, and a longhaired cat. The mother told me about the family, home rules, and other things. At that time, I noticed that there was no father. But I couldn't ask about it. I supposed him as having died, or perhaps they were divorced. I thought that it was impolite to ask about it. But she sensed my mind, and she said, 'I divorced from my husband, when my children were still tiny.' And she continued. 'I took this house and that bed from him.' She talked about it, laughing. The mother is a merry woman like the sun. At the same time, I knew that she was strong.

That's right. This woman is Mollie Anderson. She is a wise person who is working as an x-ray doctor. She is also good at cooking. I love the meat loaf and the apple crumble which she makes. She often bakes chocolate chip cookies after dinner for us. She treated me like one of her own. She took me around

supermarkets, movie theaters, and her office. (Of course I also went to the language school, but I liked to spend time with the family more than going to the language school.) Also she is tasteful. She repaints the color of a wall by herself. I came to understand that she is also doing the father's part. She is like a Super Woman. I respect her and I want to be like her.

Last spring, I went back there, in order to meet my second family. They welcomed me warmly again. If I hadn't gone to study abroad four years ago, I couldn't have had a good experience, and I wouldn't have met Mollie Anderson.

She taught me a cool way of life.

Maiko Fujiwara

A Birthday Cake/Because of You

A Birthday Cake

So much depends
upon

a birthday
sponge cake

full with
rainbow fresh cream
and colorful fruits

surrounded with
children and happiness

Because of You

I wasn't able to grow up
only by myself

Beliefs
which we've had

Difficulties
which we've gone through

Memories
which we've made

the Fact
which we've been together

thankfully
make me
who I am now

Quit Running

I belonged to track and field club while I was a student in elementary school and junior high school. But when I entered high school, there was no track and field club. So I worried, and I decided to join the tennis club, because I was a fast runner in my junior high school, and I wanted to play a sport I hadn't played before. I was taught rules and techniques of tennis by a woman teacher. She is a mother of two children, and my teacher of tennis, diet, fashion, etiquette, future, and life. I consulted her many times. She knows many things which I don't know.

She is short, 150cm. But she is good at tennis. When she was a high school student, she won the championship of the National Convention. I thought that she had started playing tennis early, so I thought that I couldn't play tennis like her. I asked her how to play tennis well. She answered, 'I started in my high school. I was a short distance runner before that. So, you can play tennis well.' I was very surprised. The time of my starting tennis was the same as her. I became confident in my ability, and I never made excuses from then on.

When members of my tennis club went to training camp, girl students were set to cutting vegetables and meat and picking fruits. Boy students were set to making desks, chairs, and playing basketball. My tennis club had many boy students. I thought I was poor at cooking, so I washed dishes or played basketball. Then she said, 'Why don't you cook? Are you poor at it? But you should try! Failure Teaches Success!' So I cut vegetables, deformed and too small. But I felt good, cooking. The curry was very delicious. So I started to cook. I still can't cook well, but I try. I am trying to discover my mind.

In the last winter of high school, I reflected on my future. I could go to university, take a year out, or try job hunting. The choices made me bothered. So I couldn't do anything. But she didn't say anything. I expected her to say, 'You should study!', 'Try next year's exam!' or 'Apply to a famous company!' But she didn't say anything. I reflected alone, and I decided to study harder to go to university. If she

had advised me, I might have resisted her advice. I had a habit of not accepting other people's advice when I was in high school. Maybe she knew my thoughts.

She knows me more than I know myself. She is in Shizuoka, but it's as if she watches me. I thought that I could be like her, but I was wrong. She is careful to find a mind inside people, and she uses her experience well. I haven't yet experienced many things, but I will try, and, next time I meet her, I want to tell her how I have thought about her.

Untitled

What did you learn from it? And what did you think about? To see countless lives being scattered, did you feel anything? Did you have deep sorrow? Did you have an anger that you didn't know where to put? Did you have a question about the way of the world? Did you hate war? Did you wish that all wars disappeared from daily life makes a sense away, what do you do? For one thing, the answer that the world become one was never forming various opinions. Keep gathering, and make this case an emblem image. The picture is never complete, but a blank is buried whenever you discover a new point of view. Give a wish to victims. Don't forget the tragedy.

Rick's Great Adventure

There was a striped squirrel. His name was 'Rick'. One day his family asked him to look for some food. He went to look for food. He discovered a forest and he took to the woods. Suddenly he was faced with a predicament. It was that he was chased by a big cat. He found a small hole and he crawled into it. The big cat gave up him. He checked the safety of the surroundings. He began to look for some food again. At last he found nuts. He wanted to carry the nuts. He stuffed nuts in his right cheek pouch. He stuffed and stuffed.

He walked through the forest. Next he found seeds. So he stuffed the seeds in his left cheek pouch. He stuffed and stuffed. He found an old bridge and he crossed it. The old bridge was broken by his weight. After he fell in a river, he was carried towards a waterfall. A bird caught sight of him. At once the bird helped him. They became good friends. The bird took him to a secret place. There were fields of sunflowers and he stuffed sunflowers seeds and he stuffed and stuffed. His cheek pouches became very big! Rick said goodbye to the bird. He gave a nut to the bird as a token of his thanks.

Finally, he found his favorite food. They were acorns. His cheek pouches were so full that he could not stuff acorns but there was an old striped squirrel there who was selling big cheek pouches. He bought two big cheek pouches and put them on. He stuffed them full of acorns. He was very happy! On his way home, he was stared at by animals because his cheek pouches were very big and they were too swollen, but he walked proudly.

His family were waiting for him at home. When he got home, they were glad. The amount of food surprised them, and they also said, 'What cool big cheek pouches you have!' They ate all the food that he had collected.

Kanako Hayashi

The Best House

There was an old house near the river. A bear lived in that house with his family. It was white winter. His house was too old to live in. Windows were broken and there were many holes in the floor. Besides, snow was coming into his house. 'This house has become so old. We can't live here anymore! We want a new house.'

So he decided to go and look for a new house.

As they walked, they found a house. It didn't look broken anywhere. 'I want to live in this house' but he found it was too small for him. It was the rabbits' house. 'We will welcome you if you want to live with us' said the rabbits, 'Thank you, but we are too big for your house. We have to find another one.'

Then they went on walking.

After a while, they found another house. It was neither broken nor too small. 'I guess we can live here!' but as they approached that house, they found a problem. It was too big for them. It was elephants' house. 'We will welcome you if you want to live with us' said the elephants, 'Thank you, but we can't live in such a big house.'

So they kept walking.

Then, they found a house near the river. It was neither too small nor too big. But it was very old. Its windows were broken and there were holes in the floor. Besides, the snow was inside the house. 'What a terrible house! But... we can live in this house after we fix everything, because this house is just our size.'

So they started repairing.

After that, they lived with satisfaction. 'This is the best house for us.'

Shouta Muro

Habit's Habitant/Colors

Habit's Habitant

so much depends
upon
their own habits
which
they handle as the marionette
who
controls them like a
puppet.

Colors

If the colors which are painting the surface of the environment
Are all mixed,
What color is there?
Will it be like the color which has been recognized before?
If it can be,
Is it surely said that it is correctly the same?
Your ignorance of colors shall deceive your fact.
If this is,
Can you certainly affirm black is the opposite color of white?
If white means there is nothing
Is transparent correct?
If you think black and red natural,
You are partly right.

Someone in the Summer

During one Bon holidays, I went to my grandparents' house to visit the grave where my ancestors sleep. To tell the truth, I did not like to be there because the house was in a rural area surrounded by woods, grass, and a river. However, I was obliged to go because to visit here in every Bon holidays is our family's custom.

When my parents and I arrived there, my grandparents welcomed us with open arms. We went to the grave which stood back some distance away from the house, walking down the road covered with grass and gravel. Although I was very hot, the refreshing winds sometimes went down the road. The grave was moss-covered and surrounded by plants, which were not only weeds but also flowers. Two bunches of new and colorful flowers, an offering, and sticks of incense were laid on the mossy old grave. I announced that I had came here again to my ancestors. As soon as we entered my grandparents' house, I enjoyed the evening cool, sitting in front of a fan. 'I'm tired...' I said to myself.

The next day, I sat in front of the fan to cool myself. I heard only three sounds, the sound of the fan motor working, cicadas, and a wind-bell swung by winds. In the house, my mother and grandmother were chatting while my father and grandfather were playing shōgi with serious faces. But it seemed that shōgi finished easily, and my father said with a laugh that my grandfather was no match for him. Then my grandfather came to me and asked me to go fishing. I had nothing to do, so I agreed and followed after him. The surface of the river was shining with the reflected light of the sun. I could see fishes swimming at the bottom of it. We enjoyed fishing but we started a competition without saying. I moved away to get more fishes than him after promising to return to the house by evening.

As soon as I arrived at an upper part of the river, I found a boy who was the same age as I was. The boy noticed me, and came up to me. He held the hem of my T-shirt smilingly. I asked who he was, although I was surprised. He did not

give me a reply but he smiled. I guessed he wanted to go with me because he had a fishing pole, too. 'Shall we fish?' I asked. He nodded happily. After that, we were wild about fishing. There were no words between us but I felt our hearts linked.

The evening sun colored the woods and river in orange all over the place. I remembered my promise to go home by evening. 'I have to go back,' I told him. We walked in the same direction. I realized he lived the neighborhood of my grandparents' house. In front of the house, my father and grandfather stood and seemed to be waiting for me. 'Did you fish alone all day?' father asked me. I turned my head, trying to introduce my friend to them. He was not there.

Next morning, my parents and I carried some baggage to the car. I heard the words 'See you again...' from somewhere. There was nobody there except my family. 'Get in the car. It's about time to leave,' my father said to me. I wondered if I would be able to see him again next year. When I was about to get into the car, a soft wind was blowing from the grave.

Kazuya Tanobe

The Bramble Road

*Me voilà libre et solitaire!
Je serai ce soir ivre-mort;
Alors, sans peur et sans remord,
Je me coucherai sur la terre,¹*

He was so lonely,
He couldn't have a right that loves people nobody,
Despite he was loved by his parents...
His born was The Birth of Tragedy

One day, he saw the beautiful flower,
But, she had already been loved by some gentlemen,
He felt sad.

He said, 'Why was I born?' 'Why is my life so solitude?'
'Why?' 'Why?' 'Why?'—Nobody told him.—Nobody! Oh, Jesus!

He committed suicide because of sickness named SOLITUDE,
He was so lonely,
There was only one coffin at the center of the chapel,
Nobody came to his funeral,
Even he dead,
He was so lonely,

His short life about 22 years ended,
But nobody remembers his life,
So I write down here to prove;
There was so lonely guy existence once in this world!
Still he was so lonely.
Forever...

¹ Charles Baudlaire, *Les Fleurs du Mal*

The Library Books Are Crying

At midnight, a noise sounded at the library. This library is a public institution and used by many citizens every day. Closing time had long since passed, so what made the noise?

Suddenly, someone began to speak. 'We have a heart, like human beings.' This vocal owner was an old illustrated book. He was angry. Then, a detective story came down to him from the opposite bookshelf and she said, 'I agree with you. Sadly, the places in which the murderer's name is written were lined with a red pen. I am very sad and angry because the next reader will lose the enjoyment of figuring out who is the culprit in my book.' Then, the old book said sympathetically, 'That was unfortunate for you. Actually, I had such an experience too. My pages were scrawled on by children and stained with pieces of chocolate and snacks that they ate while they read me! So, I became very old.'

A recipe book joined them. She sighed and spoke, 'I am unhappy to hear your troubles. Of course, I think not all of the users are bad mannered. However, I am sad that some users deal with us roughly recently. As for me, many pages of mine were clipped with scissors and paper cutters. Not only my body but also my heart is harmed.' Then the old illustrated book said furiously, 'How awful those users were! They could copy or make notes of the pages they wanted. Why did they damage the library books? We were books for everyone! We are not books for one person!' Listening to his words, the detective story and the recipe book nodded and said, 'If they had consideration for other users, they would not do such impolite things!'

While the three books complained about the bad manners of some users, they heard someone crying. A rumpled philosophy book suddenly came forward and asked, 'Would you listen to my sad experience?' And they answered, 'Of course! We are very surprised to see you again after an absence of one year.' The

philosophy book said, crying, 'I'm also happy to see you and return to this library! Surprisingly, the user who borrowed me didn't obey the date of return! He didn't return me to the library for one year in spite of a lot of warnings! At his house, I was stained with coffee and he left me at the back of his bookshelf.' The recipe book wiped his tears away and asked, 'By the way, why did he return you here?' And he answered, 'When he cleaned his place for moving, he found me and finally returned me here! I don't want to be borrowed by a user like him again!'

After the conversation, the four books said, 'We like to see users enjoy reading books! But, we are sad to be dealt with impolitely. We will look forward to meeting future users! We hope that they will read us with good manners. If they do, our library will be better for everyone!' As they returned to their respective places on the shelves, the rising sun lit up the library.

Kazuki Monzen

Hopper Moment

I can't draw any pictures well. So I will explain my Edward Hopper moment by writing. I came up with the scene in which one man is standing on a platform and everything looks gray: people's faces also dim, as if they were dead persons. I often see that scene at Shinagawa station. And I think this is a kind of Edward Hopper moment.

An Edward Hopper moment means, in my opinion, the solitary; but there is something to notice. He draws the isolated (wo)man and makes us stop to think about it. In my Edward Hopper moment, you will notice that the dim isolated person on the platform doesn't mean that he's desperate; but, rather, he has finished working that day and is ready to go home and probably communicate with his family. So we can see the responsibility and hope for the future in these people's faces looked tired.

And also they can mean that they suffer from social environment. Low wages, hard working, even stresses are there. I regard the platform as an entrance to the industrial society. It can contrast with nature. So this scene's interpretation is depending on the individual.

The Town above the Clouds

‘Where is grandpa going?’ Leo asked his mother in front of his grandfather’s grave. It was a week ago that his grandfather had died because of a stroke. His grandfather was sixty-five years old, and a merry and sociable person. Leo was five years old, and really liked his grandfather. He had often played and hung out with his grandfather. His grandfather was always funny and told jokes. He was knowledgeable, so he taught many things to Leo. Therefore, they were best friends. However, suddenly his grandfather disappeared from Leo’s world.

Leo’s mother answered, ‘Your grandpa moved to another world which is called heaven. He has lived for a long time, and he is a good person. That’s why he could have the right to live there. However, he supports and watches at you as always, and he loves you so much even though he lives in a different world now.’ Leo leaned his head to one side and asked, ‘Grandpa told me heaven is like a town which exists above the clouds. How can I go to the town above the clouds, mum? I really want to see my grandpa!!’ His mother was upset, and she thought she should have told the truth, that his grandfather had died. However, she remembered the story about heaven that grandfather had told when she was a child, and she started telling it.

‘Well...Sweetheart. As I told you, only people who get the right can go there. Do you know how to get it? Live this limited precious life doing your best. Offer a lot of smiles to people who are around you. Support many people and be respected. This is how to get the right.’ After Leo heard it, he said, ‘It sounds easy! But I will be tired if I always try to do my best...’ His mom laughed and told him, ‘You know, the people who live in the town above the clouds are watching what we do all the time. So here is a question...’ Leo was very curious about her question, so he rushed to her to ask the question. She grinned and said, ‘Do you know why we have sunny, cloudy, and rainy days? Did you know that those are messages

from the residents who live in the town above?' Leo opened his eyes big and replied, 'What! Can they control the weather and send us messages? That's awesome! What kind of messages do they send us?' His mom started imitating his grandfather's voice and said, 'As you said, those residents control the weather. Sunny days mean just do your best with a tender and cheerful heart like the sun. Cloudy days mean just stay the way you are and be honest to your mind like the white color of the sky. Rainy days mean you can be depressed like other people, but do not forget your smile to lighten people's hearts and give energy, like the lightning which impresses people. Those are the signals from the town above the clouds, which mean the messages from your grandpa as well, so keep those messages in your mind. You get it?' Leo said with a broad smile, 'Why not! As long as my grandpa sends messages, I follow his will, and I will get the right to go to the town above clouds like him! So I will see him in the future!'

Ten years later, Leo had already understood the fact that people died, and that this meant the town above the clouds never really existed. However, he still believed that, as long as he tried to do his best in his life, he would see his precious grandfather again someday.

Hitomi Kusano

You and I

In a noisy place
in a dimly lit corner
there are alcohol and snacks.

The two grow warm
with past reminiscences
and latest news.

The two rarely meet
but are familiar
with each other's ways.

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