

双语译林

英汉美文小品

A Selection of Prose Writings

李德俊等◎编译


凤凰出版传媒集团  译林出版社

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最……的“接头”

王险峰

买书的原因，想来既复杂又单纯：或许图书推介十分成功，你想想那本被吹得天花乱坠的书到底写了些什么；或许那本书的作者是个性很个性的家伙，试想他的作品也一定个性飞扬；或许只是因了那本书的封面设计叫你爱不释手；或许那本静立于书架一角的图书书名叫你感到清凉悦目……买书，是不需要任何理由的；或者说，任何一个理由，都可以说服你买下一本书。

这是书本身的魔力。但我认为，书与读者之间一定有一种说不清道不明的神秘的关系：你去逛书店，在无边的书海中，那本书无声地向你凝望，无论你从它身边错过多少次，你最终将会在它旁边驻足，懒洋洋地抽出它，漫不经心地翻开它，一目十行地扫描它，但你的手指越翻越慢，后来，停在某处不动了，有种被雷震动耳膜的感觉轰然而起——这本书，发出只有你能领会的暗号，经过一波三折，终于，你们接上了头。

这种使人怦然心动的感觉，有点像情人的初会。

由于工作关系，我接触了一些外国文学的翻译家：翻译福克纳的李文俊，翻译帕斯捷尔纳克的蓝英年，翻译普鲁斯特的许钧，翻译川端康成的叶渭渠，翻译村上春树的林少华……我怎么也忘不了，当年跟翻译华兹华斯的黄灼泉先生约稿时，先生已几乎失去视力的眼睛，手书的厚厚的尚未完稿的英诗书稿；还有身患重病的于雷先生，津津有味地跟我讲述夏目漱石小说《我是猫》中“咱家”的得意之译；我请蓝英年先生介绍《日瓦戈医生》时，从中挑选一段最精彩的片段，先生讲，没有最精彩的，全部都很精彩……译本非常重要，我会从众多的版本中，挑选一个最棒的推介给我的读者，而译著的翻译者是评估译本优劣的关键之一。当你像王小波一样推崇查良铮的译笔而对另一个将《青铜骑士》翻译得像东北二人转似的译本嗤之以鼻时——你阅

读的胃口已经给“宠坏”了。一般来说，没人会去计较若干个《红与黑》的版本孰优孰劣，但我会。因此，我审慎地对待我所钟爱的外国文学，使得每一次的图书挑选，都变成一次隆重的“接头”。

常常和译林版的图书“接头”。买过不同版次的《麦田里的守望者》，肯定会再买一本《我曾是塞林格的情人》，看过后者，你才会知道塞林格不为人知的另一面。买过《夜访吸血鬼》，一定会买《德拉库拉》和《吸血鬼莱斯特》，因为喜欢“吸血鬼之母”安妮·赖斯，我甚至将她写进我自己的书里……

2006年9月底，卡尔维诺的《为什么读经典》刚刚上架，在那排书中，唯有它是艳黄的，即使惊鸿一瞥，你的余光也会轻易地将它捉住。卡尔维诺一定是个与众不同的人，因为他的书皮是如此娇艳——有种版本的《洛丽塔》，书皮也是这种艳黄色的，纳博科夫就是一个与众不同的人。卡尔维诺在我的书架上躺了一年后，我才开始正式阅读它。他在序里写道：“在青少年时代，每一次阅读跟每一次经验一样，都会产生独特的滋味和意义；而在成熟的年龄，一个人会欣赏（或者说应该欣赏）更多的细节、层次和含义。”

某个秋天，我坐在阳台上温暖的阳光里，读杜拉斯的《物质生活》，听杜拉斯讲述她难以自控的酗酒，讲那个逼她戒酒的扬，讲在她生活中“说谎的男人”，讲她和母亲曾经经历的苦难日子……杜拉斯的文字像喝了酒似的，似醉非醉，那么急切地表达着，以至于有些词不达意。当一个女人阅读另一个女人时，惊骇地发现女人们的相似，那种不可言说的相似，叫另一个年代另一个国度的女人给阐释了。这种对于丰盛细节的理解，对文本多重意义的解读，是可以叫阅读者泪流满面的。

每个进入作品深处的人都会明白：读懂，是件既幸福又痛苦的事。

人生应该有这样的深切的阅读体验吧！所以，“接头”的一幕幕场景永不会消失——或许你遇上了影响你一生的书，但大多数时候并不是。你被这本书吸引，但读过以后，你将它束之高阁，若干年后，你或许会再次翻读它，也或许永远不会。

亲爱的读者，此刻，你正翻动着这本《英汉美文小品》，你和它之

间，正在进行着怎样的一种“接头”呢？最温馨的？最奥妙的？最轻松的？最不可思议的？……标题上省略的词语，你自己来填写吧！

当你阅读时，你已经踏入一条奔腾的异域之河，开启一段神奇的人生之旅……

2008年6月25日于郑州

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No Rainbows, No Roses

I have never seen Mrs. Trane before, but I know by the report I received from the previous shift that tonight she will die. Making my rounds, I go from room to room, checking other patients first and saving Mrs. Trane for last, not to avoid her, but because she will require the most time to care for. Everyone else seems to be all right for the time being; they have had their medications, backrubs and are easily settled for the night.

At the door to 309, I pause, adjusting my eyes to the darkness. The only light in the room is coming from an infusion pump, which is flashing its red beacon as if in warning, and the dim hall light that barely confirms the room's furnishings and the shapeless form on the bed. As I stand there, the smell hits my nostrils, and I close my eyes as I remember the stench of rot and decay from past experience. In my mouth I taste the bitter bile churning in the pit of my stomach. I swallow uneasily and cross the room in the dark, reaching for the light switch above the sink, and as it silently illuminates the scene, I return to the bed to observe the patient with a detached, medical routineness.

Mrs. Trane lies motionless: the head seems unusually large on a skeleton frame, and except for a few fine wisps of gray hair around the ears, is bald from the chemotherapy that had offered brief hope; the skin is dark yellow and sags loosely around exaggerated long bones that not even a gown and bedding can disguise; the right arm lies straight out at the side, taped cruelly to a board to secure the IV fluid its access; the left arm is across the sunken chest, which rises and falls in the uneven waves of Cheyne-Stokes respirations; a catheter hanging on the side of the bed is draining thick brown urine from the bladder, the source of the deathly smell.

I reach for the long, thin fingers that are lying on the chest. They are ice cold, and I quickly move to the wrist and feel for the weak, thready pulse. Mrs. Trane's eyes flutter open as her head turns toward me slightly. As she tries to

没有彩虹，没有玫瑰

我从来没有见过特蕾恩夫人，不过接班时从上一班接过的报告中知道她今晚就要死了。查病房时我一个病房一个病房地走，先检查其他的病人，把特蕾恩夫人留在最后。这样做并不是要避开她，而是因为可以留出最多的时间来护理她。此刻，其他的病人一切都很正常，都已服过药，擦过背，安然入睡了。

在通向309病房的门前，我停了下来，让眼睛适应黑暗。病房里唯一的光亮来自一个示警般闪着红色信号的输液泵和一盏暗淡的过道灯，勉强让人看清房内的陈设和病床上不成人形的病人。我站在那儿，病房里的味道冲鼻而入。我闭上眼睛，记起了过去经历过的那种腐败的恶臭，我的嘴里已经尝到了涌到胸口的苦胆汁。我不自在地吞咽着，在黑暗中穿过病房，摸向水池上方的电灯开关。当灯光无声无息地照亮整个病房后，我回到病床边，冷漠地、例行公事般检查起病人来。

特蕾恩夫人躺着一动不动：与骨瘦如柴的身体相比，脑袋显得异常大，在做了效果不大的化疗之后，头上除了耳朵周围有几缕灰白的头发外，已经光秃了。黄褐色的皮肤松弛地附在因消瘦而显得异常长的骨头上，即使穿着宽大的睡衣盖着被褥也掩饰不住；右手臂伸直着放在床边，用胶布固定在一块木板上以确保静脉滴注液进入体内；左手臂搭在凹陷的胸脯上，随着不齐的潮式呼吸一起一落；挂在床沿上的一根导管从膀胱向外排着浓浓的褐色尿液，死臭的气味就是从这里发出来的。

我伸出手握住那搁在胸脯上的瘦长的手指。手指冰凉，我于是迅速握向手腕，把把那微弱如丝的脉搏。特蕾恩夫人的头微微转向我，颤

form a word on her dry, parched lips, I bend close to her and scarcely hear as she whispers, "Water." Taking a glass of water from the bedside table, I put my finger over the end of the straw and allow a few droplets of the cool moisture to slide into her mouth. She makes no attempt to swallow; there is just not enough strength. "More," the raspy voice says, and we repeat the procedure. This time she does manage to swallow and weakly says, "Thank you." I touch her gently in response. She is too weak for conversation, so without asking, I go about providing for her needs, explaining to her in hushed tones each move I make. Picking her up in my arms like a child, I turn her on her side. She is so very small and light. Carefully, I rub lotion into the yellow skin, which rolls freely over the bones, feeling perfectly the outline of each vertebrae in the back and the round smoothness of the iliac crest. Placing a pillow between her legs, I notice that these too are ice cold, and not until I run my hand up over her knees do I feel any of the life-giving warmth of blood coursing through fragile veins. I find myself in awe of the life force which continues despite such a state of decomposition.

When I am finished, I pull a chair up beside the bed to face her and, taking her free hand between mine, again notice the long, thin fingers. Graceful. There is no jewelry; it would have fallen off long ago. I wonder briefly if she has any family, and then I see that there are neither bouquets of flowers, nor pretty plants on the shelves, no brightly crayon-colored posters of rainbows, nor boastful self-portraits from grandchildren on the walls. There is no hint in the room anywhere that this is a person who is loved. As though she has been reading my mind, Mrs. Trane answers my thoughts and quietly tells me, "I sent... my family... home... tonight... didn't want... them... to see..." She cannot go on, but knowingly, I have understood what it is she has done. I lower my eyes, not knowing what to say, so I say nothing. Again she seems to sense my unease, "You... stay..." Time seems to have come to a standstill. In the total silence, I noticeably feel my own heartbeat quicken and hear my breathing as it begins to match hers, stride for uneven stride. Our eyes meet and somehow, together, we become aware that this is a special moment between us, a moment when two human beings are so close we feel as if our souls touch. Her long fingers curl easily around my hand and I nod my head

颤地睁开眼睛。当她试图张开干枯的嘴唇说话时，我俯身靠近她，勉强听见她耳语道：“水。”我从床边的桌上拿了一杯水，用手指抵住吸管头，让几滴凉凉的液体流进她的嘴里。她没有做出吞咽的努力；根本就没有足够的力气来吞咽。“还要，”她沙哑地说道；于是我们又重复了刚才的程序。这一次她勉强吞了吞，有气无力地说道：“谢谢你。”我柔柔地碰碰她以示回答。她太虚弱了没办法说话，因此不用她再问，我便把她需要的东西给她，每动一次，我都轻轻地解释给她听。我像抱小孩一般用手抱起她，让她侧躺着。她竟这么小这么轻。我小心翼翼地把洗液擦在她黄黄的皮肤上，皮肤在骨头上滚卷着，我能够清楚地感觉到她后背上每一块脊椎骨的轮廓和圆滑的回肠冠。当我在她两腿间放上一个枕头时，我发现她的腿也是冰凉的，我沿着她的腿向上一直摸过膝盖才稍微感觉到在纤弱的血管里流动着的血液的暖意，那是维持生命的暖意。我发觉自己对这股行将消散却依然维持着的生命力充满敬畏。

当我把一切都做好后，我端了一把椅子靠床朝她坐下，把她可以活动的那只手握在我的掌心，再次注视着她那纤细修长的手指。优美的手指，没有戴任何首饰；即使曾经戴过，也一定很久以前就戴不住了。我有些纳闷，不知她有没有家人，而后我发现搁板上既没有花束也没有精美的盆景，墙上没有挂用彩色蜡笔画的色彩鲜艳的彩虹画，也没有挂孙子们有些夸张的自画像。房间里没有一个地方能向人们表明这是一个有人爱的人。特蕾恩夫人仿佛一直在琢磨我的心思，平静地回答了我的疑问：“今晚我把……我的家人……送回家去了……不想……让他们……看见……”她没办法接着说下去，不过我已会意，知道她做了什么。我垂下眼睛，不知道该说什么好。她又像是体会到了我的不自在，说道：“你……留下……”时间仿佛定了格。在这万籁无声的寂静中，我能明显地感觉到自己的心跳加快了，渐渐地赶上了她呼吸的频率，我清楚地听见自己的呼吸声急促起来。我们对望了一眼，不知怎的，我们双双意识到这一刻对我们来说是不同寻常的。就在这一刻，两个人靠得这么近，我们觉得我们的心灵仿佛相通了。她那修长的手指缓缓地握住我的手，我微笑着轻轻地点了点头。不用言语，我

slowly, smiling. Wordlessly, through yellowed eyes, I receive my thank you and her eyes slowly close.

Some unknown amount of time passes before her eyes open again, only this time there is no response in them, just a blank stare. Without warning, her breathing stops, and within a few moments, the faint pulse is also gone. One single tear flows from her left eye, across the cheekbone and down onto the pillow. I begin to cry quietly. There is a tug of emotion within me for this stranger who so quickly came into and went from my life. Her suffering is done, yet so is the life. Slowly, still holding her hand, I become aware that I do not mind this emotional tug of war, that in fact, it was a privilege she has allowed me, and I would do it again, gladly. Mrs. Trane had not wanted to have her family see her die, yet she did not want to die alone. No one should die alone, and I am glad I was there for her.

Two days later, I read Mrs. Trane's obituary in the paper. She had been a widow for five years, was the mother of seven, grandmother of eighteen, an active member of her church, a leader of volunteer organizations in her community, college-educated in music, a concert pianist, and a piano teacher for over thirty years.

Yes, they were long and graceful fingers.

从那发黄的眼睛里收到了她给我的感谢,然后她的眼睛缓缓地闭上了。

不知过了多长时间,她的眼睛再次睁开了,只是这一次眼睛里已没有任何反应,不过是空洞的注视。没有任何征兆,她的呼吸就停止了,过了一会儿,那微弱的脉搏也消失了。一滴眼泪从她的左眼滑落,流过颧骨,落在枕头上。我无声地哭了。在我的内心深处,我对这个匆匆走进我的生活又匆匆逝去的陌生人怀着一种矛盾的情感。她的痛苦结束了,可是她的生命也一样结束了。渐渐地——我仍然握着她的手——我想明白了。我并不在意这种情感矛盾,其实她允许我守护她已是我的荣幸,我会很乐意再做一次。特蕾恩夫人没有让她的家人目睹她死去,可是她不想孤独地死去。每个人都不应该孤独地死去,因此我很高兴我能在她人生最后的时刻陪伴她。

两天后,我在报纸上读到了特蕾恩夫人的讣告。她已孀居五年,是七个孩子的母亲,十八个孩子的祖母,是她所在教会的积极分子,社区自愿者团体的负责人,受过大学音乐教育,是一位钢琴演奏家,从事钢琴教学三十余年。

是的,那是修长优雅的手指。

(叶建军译)

A Visit with the Folks

Periodically I go back to a churchyard cemetery on the side of an Appalachian hill in northern Virginia to call on family elders. It slows the juices down something marvelous.

They are all situated right behind an imposing brick church with a tan square brick bell tower best described as honest but not flossy. Some of the family elders did construction repair work on that church and some of them, the real old timers, may even have helped build it, but I couldn't swear to that because it's been there a long, long time.

The view, especially in early summer, is so pleasing that it's a pity they can't enjoy it. Wild roses blooming on fieldstone fences, fields white with daisies, that soft languorous air turning the mountains pastel blue on toward the West.

The tombstones are not much to look at. Tombstones never are in a book, but they do help in keeping track of the family and, unlike a family, they have the virtue of never chafing at you.

This is not to say they don't talk after a fashion. Every time I pass Uncle Lewis's I can hear it say, "Come around to the barber shop, boy, and I'll cut that hair." Uncle Lewis was a barber. He left up here for a while and went to the city, Baltimore. But he came back after the end. Almost all of them came back finally, those that left, but most stayed right here all along.

Well, not right here in the churchyard, but out there over the fields, two, three, four miles away. Grandmother was born just over that rolling field out there near the woods the year the Civil War ended, lived most of her life about three miles out the other way there near the mountain, and has been right here near this old shade tree for the past 50 years.

We weren't people who went very far. Uncle Harry, her second child, is