

中英文对照

[美] 钟丽(Lily Chung Yip) 钟昆(Agnes Chung Wen) 著

(修订版)

海外浮生

Changing Flowers



现代出版社

中英文对照



[美] 钟丽(Lily Chung Yip) 钟昆(Agnes Chung Wen) 著

海外浮生 漫笔



现代出版社

图书在版编目 (C I P) 数据

海外浮生/钟丽,钟昆著. - 北京:现代出版社,2003
ISBN 7-80028-331-3

I. 海... II. ①钟... III. 长篇小说-中国
-当代 IV. I247.5

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字(2002)第 069852 号

原 作: 钟丽 钟昆

责任编辑: 张 颖

装帧设计: 程阳阳

出版发行: 北京市安定门外安华里 504 号 邮政编码: 100011

电 话: 010-64267325 010-64240483 (兼传真)

电子邮箱: xiandai@cnpitc.com.cn

印 刷: 固安博通印务有限公司

开 本: 880 × 1230 1/32

印 张: 12.25

字 数: 130 千字

版 次: 2004 年 3 月第 1 版 2004 年 3 月第 1 次印刷

书 号: ISBN 7-80028-331-3

定 价: 20.00 元

版权所有, 翻印必究; 未经许可, 不得转载

To our children

Felix, Ivan, Alex, and Lauren Yip

Jennifer and Pamela Wen

Acknowledgement

I wish to thank my daughters, Jennifer and Pamela, for their encouragement and advice in helping me to prepare the first draft of this collection of stories. Another debt of gratitude is owed to my mentor and friend, Professor John Deeney, who managed to find time in his busy teaching schedule to help improve the final English version.

—A. W.

Authors' Translation/Transliteration Note

Some expressions in the English translations are elaborations of the original rather than strict translations. This is a useful expedient when the original Chinese contains certain difficult idiomatic expressions, traditional sayings, etc. that defy translation. With the exception of some proper names, the transcription system used throughout is *Hanyu Pinyin*.

Preface

Mom and E-ma. What do I really know about my mother and my aunt? I know they are very close to their two brothers and one sister. I know they are from Canton. I know they are both loving, hardworking mothers. E-ma (my aunt) is a cancer researcher and science teacher and mother of four and Mom is a librarian and mother of my sister, Jennifer and me.

I close my eyes and let my thoughts wander to memories. Memories of a laughter-filled room and a wooden table full of delicious Chinese dishes at my E-ma's house in New York surrounded by Mom, Dad, my sister, Big E-ma, E-ma, cousins, and uncles. It is one memory of several such gatherings throughout the years. We are laughing, or joking, or telling funny stories that leave us with tear-stained faces and aching stomachs.

Mom and E-ma, they have the gift of words. They can weave them together and captivate the listener into a world of imagination or reality. Their stories come from both real and fictitious events carefully woven to entwine you. Many are based on situations that have affected them about their lives in America.

Mom and E-ma. What do I really know about my mother and my aunt? I know a comforting memory of stories still to be told around a crowded wooden table.

As you read each story, I ask of you to reach into your own memories, and to close your eyes, and imagine...

Pamela Tze-ling Wen

Lily' s Stories

Contents

Preface	3
---------------	---

Lily' s Stories

I Love Telling Stories	1
Luba	3
Daughters in the House of Yang	28
Forever, Violet	59
Everlasting Love	84
Scandalous Scientists	110
Changing Flowers	126

Agnes' Stories

Wish	140
Silent Love	142
Tina	146
Lucy	149
Good – bye, Taipei	153
Housewives' Lunch Club	158
Second Generation	162

Life, American Style	166
Teacher's Banquet	169
The World Journal and Me	172
Being a Mother	174
Reflection From Illness — Count Your Blessings	178
Tender Heart	181
The Joys and Sorrows of Middle Age	184
Child's Talk	188
Family vs. Career	190
Portrait of An Artist — Xiangmei Guo	194
In Memoriam	198
My Cat	201
Growing Pains and Joys	204
The Auntie Li that I Know	209
Overseas Summer Job	211
Old Times, Old Friends	217

I Love Telling Stories

As a working scientist living in America, I hardly had a chance to read or write Chinese. Then my parents came from Taiwan and stayed with my family until they passed away. During the time my parents were with us, it was my daily duty to bring home a copy of the Chinese newspaper, The World Journal, from the subway newsstand for them. That was how I got the chance to refresh my ability to use my native language. Even though I spend most of my time reading scientific journals and writing scientific articles, deep down I have always loved sentimental novels. One of my passionate hobbies is reading. Bestsellers in English and occasionally Chinese are my companions on my way to work in the New York subway and at night before I fall into exhausted sleep. I love reading stories and telling them.

I read most of the stories in The World Journal and found that, although many of them were about the lives of overseas Chinese, very few were written by scientists about their fellow scientists. Scientists are human beings; they possess loyalty, sentimentality, and generosity, as well as selfishness and pettiness. Scientists, like people in other professions, go through life with love, hate, sadness, and joy, and with failure and triumph. There are many stories to be told.

My mother was a great story-teller, and one of her regrets was that she had never had the time, when the children were young, or the energy, when she was old, to write the stories down. In memory of her, I

海外浮生

Changing Flowers

started to write my first story, Luba, during one of my Mother's Day inspirations. The manuscript was accepted by the editor of The World Journal and published immediately after. Feeling encouraged, I began to tell my other stories.

Luba

There were half a million Jews living in Warsaw , Poland , before World War II . By the end of the war , only a few hundred were left . Luba was one of the lucky few .

It was a hot afternoon in July . We felt like we were walking into a burning oven as we left the car with its air conditioner at full blast . There were no trees in sight , just an endless dirt road and narrow gravel path . Unmarked graves were covered with dry weeds . The light and heat of the bright sun stirred up clouds of dry dust dancing above the ground , giving us the illusion of being in a dream and not in reality . We were standing in front of a Jewish charity cemetery . We had come to attend a funeral service for Luba Gellar .

There was no receiving room or office for the cemetery , as business was conducted and arrangements made from a synagogue nearby . A huge , arched structure served as the entrance to the cemetery . As we approached , we saw two couples sitting on benches that were placed near the wall , conversing . Among the three of us , Mary was the most unabashed and sociable one , so she went over and introduced herself . George and I stood before the wall mindlessly reading the carved names of people who had contributed to the setup and up-keep of the cemetery . A few minutes later , Mary came over and told us that those people , Mr. and Mrs. Kaufmann and Mr. and Mrs. Goldberg , were also here for Luba 's funeral . She then introduced all of us . The Goldbergs were

friends of Luba's brother, Aaron, and Mrs. Kaufmann was a classmate and close friend of Luba at Wesleyan University in Connecticut. They were staring at the three of us with curiosity and wonderment. Mary, the tall, slim blond with blue eyes, who was obviously of German descent, George, a charcoal black stocky American, and me, a tiny quiet Asian woman, made a most eye-catching entourage at a Jewish funeral service. If they thought that Luba had been strange and out of the ordinary in life, then our presence together here was probably an anticipated surprise in their minds.

We all sat together and waited. After a while, Mrs. Kaufmann began to show her impatience with her complaints, "We were told the funeral would take place at three o'clock, and now it is already ten after three. Aaron was never a very responsible person, but he should at least try to be punctual for his sister's burial. If he doesn't show up before sun-down, we will have to come back tomorrow."

"It's unbearably hot today, especially when you're waiting. Maybe it's a New York traffic jam problem, and not Aaron's fault." Mrs. Goldberg was defending Aaron.

Mrs. Kaufmann was about to give another retort, but was stopped by her husband's silent gesture.

I asked Mary: why couldn't a funeral take place after sundown? She told me it was a Jewish custom. Then we saw a hearse moving slowly towards the entrance in our direction. After the hearse stopped, we saw Aaron, together with a big fellow and another man in a black robe who was also wearing a large black hat, get out. The men who had been sitting with us got up and went to the back of the hearse to help carry the coffin. Aaron had changed a lot since the last time I saw him. In my memory, Aaron, Luba's darling little brother, was a wit-

ty, fearless, good-looking young man. The man coming toward us looked haggard and beaten up, a broken man with a shaved head. I was surprised and exclaimed, "What happened to his hair?"

Mrs. Kaufmann answered with contempt in her expression, "He shaved it all off. This is our Jewish custom of showing regret and asking for redemption. But isn't it too late? Too late for that selfish bastard."

Standing by the gravesite, we watched the men slowly lowering the thin wooden coffin into the hollow ground as the Rabbi murmured the Hebrew prayer for the dead, something like the saying, "Ashes to ashes, and dust to dust..." My head was spinning with the words Mrs. Kaufmann had said, "It is too late, it is too late, it is too late..." Yes, for Luba everything had been too late, starting from the day of her birth.

It was about fourteen years ago, that I first met Luba, not long after I had joined the Cancer Research Institute in New York as a research associate. Being a mother of four young children, I always tried to go to work earlier and leave before rush hour so that I could be home early. That morning, as I was sitting at my desk concentrating on planning my experiments for the day, I heard a knock at my door, which was usually open, followed by a low whisper from someone with a heavy European accent, "Dr. Yip, may I come in?" I turned around and looked at the open door. The first thing that caught my sight was a head of unnaturally bright red hair. She seemed to be very nervous and timid, like a little girl about to be punished. Her expression was in contrast to her aged and wrinkled face. Her slightly hunched back and her thinness gave me the impression that she was a rather slight woman. Not until I got close to greet her, could I see that she was taller than average. I was quite curious about who she was.

"What can I help you with?" I greeted her with a smile.

"My name is Luba Gellar, I work on the 10th floor in Dr. Lipman's laboratory. I am Dr. Lipman's technician. Dr. Beam told me that I could come here to borrow some chemicals." Dr. Beam, my boss, was the head of the biochemistry research section, and he and Dr. Lipman were known to be good friends.

From then on, Luba became a frequent visitor to my laboratory, and I became her mentor. From borrowing chemicals to using our special instruments, to her experimental design, she always came to me for help and advice. If problems occurred, Luba would not hesitate to ask me for a solution. There was an agreement between Dr. Beam, who was a biochemist, and Dr. Lipman, who was a physician in gastroenterology, to cooperate in their research. I was told to help Luba in any way possible. Dr. Lipman might be a renowned gastroenterologist, but he was not a trained research scientist. It would be very convenient for him to send his technician down one floor to learn from us. In any research institute that was affiliated with a hospital, the scientists need patient samples for research and the physicians need the help of scientists for information and direction for their clinical trials and experiments. All of them have one goal in mind: to get more grant money for further research and to become famous. To young and as yet unestablished researchers, the saying goes something like: "Publish or perish."

Both Dr. Beam and Dr. Lipman were Jews, but they were very different in their temperaments. Dr. Beam was an outgoing, energetic, and fun-loving person, while his friend was secretive and conniving. Dr. Beam frequently ridiculed Dr. Lipman's experimental design in the presence of other scientists, and embarrassed his friend relentlessly.

It's possible that Dr. Lipman encouraged Luba to seek my help in-

stead of others because he thought that a Chinese person would be more reserved and respectful to others. Besides, Luba was considered as “odd” by many of my co-workers, and they thought of her as a loner, an old maid who was hard to get along with. Contrary to what most of my co-workers thought, I found Luba to be a sensible and intelligent individual. Guessing from her timid and fearful mannerisms, I assumed that she must have had a very tough life in her past, and felt compassionate towards her. Gradually, Luba began to trust me and we became friends. She would tell me of some of Dr. Lipman’s secret projects, and we would have a good laugh together. For example, Dr. Lipman’s “shit-drop experiment,” a name jokingly given by us, was one of the funniest. When a new gastrogenic carcinogen (a chemical that would cause cancer of the digestive tracts), was reported, Dr. Lipman wanted to know how the cancer had developed and would ask Luba to feed twenty mice with the carcinogen daily, each one in a different cage. Every day, one of Luba’s duties was to count the droppings of each mouse, measure the size of each dropping, record any color changes, and test the dropping’s softness or hardness. He hoped that the results would correlate with the development of cancer. Of course, there could be no significant correlation between this simple-minded design and the complicated processes of digestion and cancer development. Every time, I saw Dr. Lipman whispering to Luba in the hallway with his eyes darting here and there nervously, I knew for sure that another Nobel Prize-winning project was on its way.

Even though Luba became a close associate of mine, her relationship with my other co-workers remained the same. Only occasionally would she talk to George, a black man who was our senior technician in charge of laboratory animal care. George was such a sweet and helpful