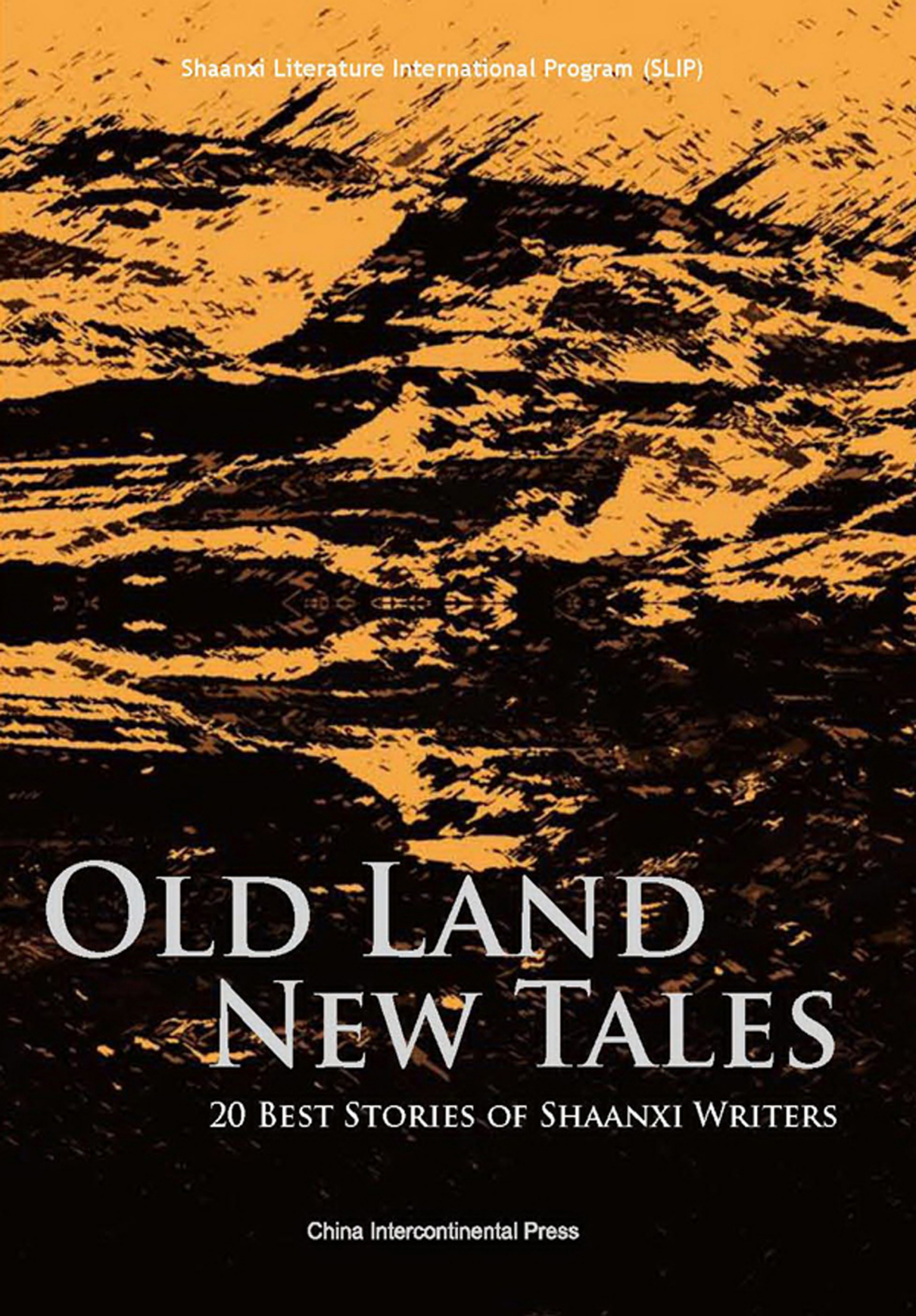




Shaanxi Literature International Program (SLIP)

OLD LAND NEW TALES

20 BEST STORIES OF SHAANXI WRITERS

China Intercontinental Press

Shaanxi Literature International Program (SLIP)

Old Land New Tales:

20 Best Stories of Shaanxi Writers

图书在版编目 (CIP) 数据

陕西作家短篇小说集：英文 / 陕西省作家协会编写；陕西省翻译协会译.

-- 北京：五洲传播出版社，2011.4

ISBN 978-7-5085-2086-5

I. ①陕… II. ①陕… ②陕… III. ①短篇小说-小说集-中国-当代-英文

IV. ①I247.7

中国版本图书馆CIP数据核字(2011)第052468号

策划编辑：荆孝敏

责任编辑：郑 磊 王晓渭（兼）

装帧设计：叶 影 郑美一

陕西作家短篇小说集

出版发行：五洲传播出版社

地 址：北京市海淀区北三环中路31号生产力大楼B座7层

邮 编：100088

电 话：010-82005927，010-82007837

网 址：www.cicc.org.cn

开 本：160mm×230mm 1/16

印 张：25

版 次：2011年8月第1版第1次印刷

印 刷：北京海纳百川印刷有限公司

书 号：ISBN 978-7-5085-2086-5

09900

Members of Editorial Committee

Directors

Lei Tao, Party Secretary and Executive Vice Chairman of Shaanxi Writers Association

Jia Pingwa, Chairman of Shaanxi Writers Association

Deputy Directors

An-Wei, Chairman of Shaanxi Translation Association

Chen Xiaoying, President of China Society for Comedy Aesthetics Studies and senior advisor of Shaanxi Translation Association

Ma Ke, Vice Chairman and Secretary General of Shaanxi Translation Association

Members

Li Guoping, Vice Chairman of Shaanxi Writers Association

Wang Fangwen, Secretary General of Shaanxi Writers Association and Director of Creative & Liaison Department, Shaanxi Writers Association

Wang Peng, Vice Chairman of Shaanxi Writers Association

Ye Guangqin, Vice Chairman of Shaanxi Writers Association

Bai Aying, Vice Chairman of Shaanxi Writers Association

Feng Jiqi, Vice Chairman of Shaanxi Writers Association

Gao Jianqun, Vice Chairman of Shaanxi Writers Association

Zhu Hong, Vice Chairman of Shaanxi Writers Association

Mo Shen, Vice Chairman of Shaanxi Writers Association

Li Kangmei, Vice Chairman of Shaanxi Writers Association

Leng Meng, Vice Chairman of Shaanxi Writers Association

Hong Ke, Vice Chairman of Shaanxi Writers Association

Zhang Hong, Vice Chairman of Shaanxi Writers Association

Yan An, Vice Chairman of Shaanxi Writers Association

Qin Quan'an, Deputy Secretary General of Shaanxi Translation Association

Wang Xiaowei, Vice Director of Creative & Liaison Department of Shaanxi Writers Association

Hu Zongfeng, Deputy Dean, School of Foreign Languages, Northwest University

Li Hao, Vice President of Northwest University and Dean of Arts School, Northwest University

Yang Dafu, Former Dean of English Studies School, Xi'an International Studies University

Li Xijian, Dean of Chinese Language and Literature School, Shaanxi Normal University

Zhang Yujin, Associate Professor of International Studies School, Xi'an Jiaotong University and Deputy Secretary General of Shaanxi Translation Association

Kong Baoer, Chief Reporter of Xi'an TV Station, Board Member of Shaanxi Translation Association

Editing Group of Overseas Experts

Robert Farnsworth

Audrae Coury

Buffy Gilfoil

Andy Gross Green

Darlene Kunze

Myrtis Mixon

Julia Phillips

Vicky Tangi

Allison Adair

Sonya Lason

Michael Lestz

Mary Warpeha

Robin Gilbank

Preface

Let Literature Fly through the Blue Sky and White Clouds

Lei Tao

As the spiritual secret history of a nation, literature, especially novels, could only find its spiritual value through communications and collisions. This kind of value not only belongs to a nation but also the civilized society of the whole human beings. From “May Fourth” Movement till today, lots of foreign literary works have been translated and introduced into China and resulted in huge changes to the literary aesthetic standard of Chinese people. What’s more important, the mind visions and virtues of people are greatly enriched through the reading of translated works. Meanwhile, works of many Chinese writers are translated into all kinds of languages as well, which makes worldwide readers gradually come to understand the spiritual changes and ethical pursuit of the Chinese nation as well as different situations of China. From the perspective of cultural exchange, we cannot think it’s too excessive to recommend the introduction of different works mutually.

Fortunately, after the implementation of Reform and Open Policy of new China, this kind of introduction and communication has been accelerated greatly, and its channels and methods tend to be diverse. It is an important component of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. The advent of the spring of literature and arts as well as the effective enforcement of external literature exchange activities also proves the ambition and confidence of the Chinese nation is making strides towards world arena.

It is just under this major background that Literature Translation Special Committee of Shaanxi Writers’ Association of China started “SLIP” program in 2008, i.e. popularizing and introducing works of present outstanding writers of Shaanxi Province overseas step by step. The implementation and promotion of this program gained the approval and support of Chinese Writers’ Association and China National Publications Import & Export Corporation. The first book of “SLIP” program is the Chinese-Russian version of *Deep Love of Russia*. And the book before us today is the

second one. The colleagues of Shaanxi Writers' Association and Provincial Translation Association got in touch with numerous friends in literature and translation circles and finally finished all publishing procedures of the book within a short period through hard work. Their passion and professional dedication towards the enterprise have won high praise and great admiration. This kind of loyalty to literature and hearty charity are just an example and explanation of our society's leap towards modern civilization.

It should be said that the twenty novels selected in the book represent the standard and style of contemporary writers on this old but civilized land—Shaanxi. This community leads the main army of Shaanxi literature to go forward. And nearly all of them are winners of national literature awards (such as Mao Dun Literature Award, Lu Xun Literature Award, Bing Xin Literature Award and Stallion Award for minority nationality). From this perspective, the works also reflect the development tendency and general level of present literary creation in China. I sincerely hope the works of these writers will become popular among readers in the English-speaking world. The sky of literature is vast and blue, and it is a realm with hope and fantasy. All writers which want to achieve their dreams of literature have desire to add wings to their literary works so as to fly through the blue sky and white clouds of the heaven.

I cross my fingers and pray conscientious writers that truly love life and people, and expect peaceful development of the world and human progress to keep striving for the sacred literature together with Chinese Shaanxi writers.

We are under the same blue sky, and we have the same destination. This is the home to literature, and also the source of our strength.

February 7, 2011



About the Author

Lei Tao, a member of National Committee of Chinese Writers' Association, executive vice-chairman of Shaanxi Writers' Association, researcher of Shaanxi Research Institute of Culture and History and also director of Literature Translation Special Committee of Shaanxi Writers' Association. Coming from Wugong County of Shaanxi Province, he graduated from the Chinese Department of Northwest University and majored in Chinese Language and Literature. He served successively as the secretary to the minister of Publicity Department of Shaanxi Provincial Party Committee, deputy director of Publicity Division, office manager of Publicity Department and chief editor of Shaanxi Publicity Guide as well as executive vice factory director of Xi'an Film Studio, etc. His published literary works including *Approach to Alps*, *Move Towards the Realm*, *Women out of Xi'an Film Studio* and *Scales and Nails at the Core of Literature*, etc.



● CONTENTS

1	Elder Sister Lu Yao	11
2	A Tale of Li Shisan and the Millstone Chen Zhongshi	25
3	The Country Wife Jia Pingwa	44
4	Oh, A Colt ! Zou Zhian	93
5	The Walking-Stick Jing Fu	116
6	A Trip for Love —Story of an Unmarried Mother Gao Jianqun	130
7	Love's Unknown Number Li Tianfang	163
8	Rain —The Story of Hiroshima Ye Guangqin	171
9	Who Would Go to the Scaffold Xiao Lei	213
10	The Soul of the Great Wall Zhao Xi	235

11	The Butcher's Knife Feng Jiqi	251
12	The Portrait of the Ancestor Li Kangmei	270
13	One Family in the Desert Hong Ke	283
14	Mountain Forest Lasting for Ever Mo Shen	297
15	Sister Yinxiu Wang Peng	309
16	Lei Ping'er Zhang Hong	326
17	The Blood-Stained Dress Wu Kejing	341
18	At the Foot of Mount Yanzhi Wang Guansheng	353
19	Star Gazing Li Chunguang	368
20	Wife, or Otherwise Huang Weiping	383



LU YAO

Lu Yao (December 3, 1949 ~ November 17, 1992), formerly known as Wang Weiguo, the Han nationality, is a Chinese contemporary writer. He was born in a poor peasant family of Qingjian County, Yulin City, Shaanxi Province on December 3, 1949, and was adopted by his uncle in a village of Yanchuan County for his family being poor when he was 7 years old. He ever studied in the Middle School of Yanchuan County and returned home to work as a farmer in 1969. During this time he did a lot of temporary works and ever taught in a rural primary school for one year. He was accepted by the Department of Chinese Language and Literature, Yan'an University in 1973, and then started his literature creation. After graduation, he served as an editor of *Shaanxi Literature* (currently known as *Yanhe River*). His works, *A Suspenseful Scene*, was published in 1980 and won the first National Award for Best Novella. And the novella, *Life*, published in 1982, describes the life goals and uneven experiences of a rural educated youth, causing great repercussions and winning the second National Award for Best Novella. After being adapted to a film of the same name, it won the eighth Hundred Flowers Award for Best Feature Film, becoming a great hit across the country. His works, *In the Difficult*

Days, won the Nobel Prize granted by Contemporary Literature in 1982, and in the same year, Lu Yao joined the Chinese Writers Association. The long masterpiece of million words, *Ordinary World*, was completed in 1988, which is a panoramic novel presenting the contemporary urban and rural social life with a total of three volumes. Under the vast background of the last decade, the writer portrays the images of a number of ordinary people of different social classes through the complex contradictions. Labor and love, frustration and pursuit, pleasures and pains, daily life and enormous social conflict, are mixed with each other complicatedly, deeply showing the difficult and tortuous path that the ordinary people went through in the historical era. With a magnificent momentum and epic character, the panoramic novel demonstrates the huge changes in social life and human feelings of China's urban and rural areas in the reform era, for which Lu Yao won the third Mao Dun Literature Award. And even when the book was not finished, it was broadcasted by the China National Radio. At 8:20 am on November 17, 1992, Lu Yao failed to respond to any medical treatment and died from cirrhosis ascites in Xi'an at the age of 42.

Elder Sister

Lu Yao

My 27-year-old sister should have been married a long time ago. In rural areas, it is a disgrace for a girl of that age to continue her bachelorette's life in her parents' home. Embarrassing rumors have been circulating in the village, which stings more than the severest slap on our faces.

Papa used to be a man of few words. Ever since Mama was dead, he has simply shut his mouth, busying himself with all sorts of farm work. Neither Sister's marriage nor other family affairs can arouse his slightest interest.

I love my sister. Pure, tender and kind, she is a white cloud in the azure sky. Villagers say she is a good-looking lass. What they say is true. Every village here, no matter how remote or backward, boasts at least a few stunningly beautiful lasses who, like the local produce—dates and day lilies, are even known by people from the provincial capital as well as folks living in the neighboring towns and townships. Why, don't you believe it? Go and ask whomever is on the road.

I am not bragging if I tell you that my sister is just one of these beautiful lasses. She has been my idol since I developed a love for art and a taste for beauty in my childhood. Once Mama told me, a provincial singing and dancing troupe had intended to recruit Sister as an actress when she was still a little girl, only to be refused by her and Papa on the scores that she was too small and that they would not like being parted from her.

Several years have passed since Sister graduated from high school. She took entrance examinations for higher education, but failed each time, only a few points short of the admission criteria. Sister went to high school in a time when the Cultural Revolution was seething with enthusiasm, so she didn't learn much. Now with a foreign language, she knows not even the 26 letters included in the entrance examination and it seems that her hope to



become a college student is gone forever. There is no way for her to become a worker, either, for the security of that kind of career needs going through a back door. And even if a back door is open for her, there is no vacancy left to be filled for the time being. It seems she is destined to be a farmer and will have to labor all her life away in the fields. However, Sister looks as if she doesn't mind being a farmer at all. As she has been brought up in this barren area, no farm tasks even the toughest can possibly deter her. Everyone in the village says she equals a man in doing farm work.

The feet of matchmakers have worn thin the threshold of our house these years. Among the candidates they sought for my sister most were cadres or workers from bigger cities, but none has ever hit her fancy. Villagers feel sorry for her to have missed so many golden chances, and are wondering at the same time why a 27-year-old girl is not the least worried about such an important event of life as her own marriage.

In point of fact, Sister has already had a sweetheart, and this is a secret kept from the whole world but me.

The lad loved by Sister is Gao Limin, an educated youth^① from the provincial capital. People say his father was a deputy governor of our province, his mother the director of a certain bureau. Accused of heading a spy organization, they were arrested and imprisoned soon after the Cultural Revolution broke out.

Of the dozen youngsters who had come along with Gao Limin, some were recommended to study in universities, some were taken on as workers, returning to cities one after another. Gao Limin was detained because of his parents' cases. Not only couldn't he get away from this village, he couldn't even lead an easy life as a farmer, being given a dressing-down every so often in the commune or the county. Those years found him a most wretched dog, for being the son of spies was worse than being reactionaries in the eyes of the masses. As most villagers dare not associate with him for fear of courting unexpected disasters, Gao Limin, like a lamb alienated from the herd, could

① Educated youth: urban high school graduates who went to work and settle in the rural areas in response to the call of Mao Zedong during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976).

only keep his own company. His clothes were too shabby even for a beggar; he ate raw as he knew not how to cook, and as a result often suffered from stomachaches that would send him rolling about on the mud ground.

Finding it unbearable to see him suffer like that, my sister often went to help him with the cooking, sewing and mending, and washing. When festivals arrived, Sister would bring him home and provide him with the best food we could offer. Sometimes I doubted I was her younger brother because she seemed to care more for him than she did for me.

My parents never gave a grunt against Sister for doing it. They both were kind-hearted farmers just like my sister. However, some folks in the village began making up stories, and said my sister and Gao Limin had an abnormal relationship. Such words they dare not say in the presence of my sister or my parents, but often said to me when I was a little boy. And each time I would protest.

“Sister’s just being kind to Limin. How can you guys ruin their good names?” I said furiously.

They would always burst into a peal of guffaws.

Everyone knew that Gao Limin was the son of spies. Why should Sister treat him in such a kind way? This was a question which turned over in my mind all the time.

Once I held out on my parents and asked her, “Sister, Limin is the son of spies, why don’t you just steer clear of him like everybody else? Aren’t you afraid people say you lack political awareness and can’t tell who’s our friend and who’s our enemy?”

My sister smiled, pressing her finger on my nose, “Baowa, you are more radical than Secretary Liu of the commune. Limin’s only fallen on bad days. He is no class enemy, so we need not make a clean break with him. Don’t you remember Grandma’s instructions? Grandma—may she rest in peace—used to say we should try our best to help those who are down, or if we do something evil we’ll be struck dead by lightning. Look, here in our village he has no friend, no family to depend on. Can we bear to see him suffer to death? Talk bullshit as they may! There is nothing to be afraid of!”

All of the sudden I was enlightened.



To rumors and slanders Sister just turned a deaf ear, and when all the other educated youths left the village, she cared for him more tenderly than ever.

I still remember the day when Limin fell sick. Sister spent a whole day looking after him. She took flour, sesame, pickled leek flowers from home, and made for him a meal of noodles. Noodles! What a rare meal! Imagine we were rationed to no more than 15 *jin*^② of wheat per head per year.

It was late afternoon. My sister remained in Limin's cave dwelling because a high fever had set on him. By the time it was dark enough to light a lamp; Mama became worried and went over to have a look. Instead of getting Sister back, she herself stayed and joined in the watch for the whole night.

How nice the relationship between Sister and Limin! Who can say their relationship is abnormal?

However, it was not long before I came to realize what the word "abnormal" actually meant by those gossipers.

One late summer afternoon, the clouds in the western sky burned crimson like fire for a moment before they changed into ash-gray. As daylight lingered, I snatched a few clothes and went to the river in front of the village. The clothes to be washed were not so dirty, but as you know, I am a boy who loves cleanliness and beauty very much.

As I was walking along the path above the threshing ground, I suddenly heard two persons talking behind a pile of wheat straw. The voices revealed they were a man and a woman.

Driven by child curiosity, I stooped down and sneaked to the back of the wheat stack. My goodness! The sight almost scared me off my nuts. The man and woman were no other than Limin and my sister. Limin was holding my sister in his arms and kissing her madly on the cheek! I shivered, stumbling and scrambling all the way back to where I had been.

I stood by the path, my heart beating violently as if to leap out of my mouth. I had wanted to run away at once, but then their voices came again,

② *Jin*, Chinese unit of weight, 1 *jin* ≈ 1.1 pounds.

and I was tempted to hear what they were going to say.

“...you’re a kind person, Xing’er. I love you. I’ll never leave you. I can’t live without you. Tell me that you love me, too. Promise to love me, eh? But for what...my parents have been in prison for six or seven years. It seems I’ll have to end up as the son of spies for the rest of my life, maybe you’ll be afraid...” It was Limin’s voice.

“No, I’m not afraid. I can wait, even if you are jailed.” My sister replied.

Limin wept. Soon he was heard speaking to my sister again.

“Xing’er, I’ll give you all I have! I’ll never forget it’s your love that comes to my rescue under such circumstances. As I lived in clover after birth, I am not sure whether I’ll make a good farmer in the future. You’ll be implicated...”

“I’m not afraid, Limin! I love you. You’ll always find me at your side—even if you become a beggar.”

Limin wept again, sobbing like a baby. My sister joined him—obviously not out of sadness.

Oddly enough, tears welled up in my eyes. I wept too.

I fumbled my tearful way to the quiet riverside. In the dusk I stood motionless, eyes gazing at the distant somber outline of mountains. Ages went by before I could really figure out what had moved me into tears. My dear sister! Limin is such a piece of rotten meat that even a fly won’t take a second look. While everyone shuns him as a plague you fall in love with him! A child’s innocent heart told me that my sister had done something right despite my vague understanding of the love between man and woman.

On that evening, Sister invited Limin home, and took the liberty to make *jiaozi*^③ for supper. My parents, thrifty in everydayness, kept asking my sister: why eat such good food since it is neither a festival nor a New Year Day?

Sister and Limin might have been laughing up their sleeves. Yet they did not know there was still another who was just like them laughing up his little sleeve.

③ *Jiaozi*: dumpling.



Great changes took place years later. After the downfall of Gang of Four^④, Limin's parents were set free, their unjust cases having been redressed. The following year, my sister encouraged Limin to register for college entrance examination. They both took the examination, but with utterly different results. Limin was enrolled by a university in Beijing. My sister, a few points short of the admission criteria, failed again.

Limin left. The whole village talked about him, their enthusiasm on him lasting several days. They said now that everything had changed, and that he had turned from a black bird to a phoenix, he ten to one would stretch his wings and fly away. My sister was experiencing a most complicated feeling of happiness and sadness. She felt happy for Limin who had succeeded in the entrance examination, but upset because that would mean several years of separation from him. I, an older boy by now, who was going to attend junior high school in two years, had learned something about the secret of love. I knew my sister would feel sad and lonely. She loved Limin so much that even a second or a minute's separation would likely upset her. Once my sister was upset, I was upset.

I didn't expect there would be any means of expediency.

I found that my sister had been regularly frequenting the road opposite the village. There she collected Limin's letters from the hand of Uncle Li the town postman, and in return gave him letters to be sent to Beijing. It looked as if my sister had reached some agreement with Uncle Li, or perhaps Uncle Li had been asked to keep the whole matter a secret. So far, no one but me in our village was in the know.

My sister was loath to let the cat out of the bag. The villagers wagged tongues no more, though, yet if they discovered the fact they would make bawdy jokes to embarrass a shy girl like my sister.

Papa appeared to be ignorant—or was he just pretending that he only cared about his land and crops? Sometimes I saw him gazing at the back of my sister in a pitiful and melancholy way. He said nothing, but would usually heave a deep sigh.

④ Gang of Four: Jiang Qing, Zhang Chunqiao, Wang Hongwen and Yao Wenyuan, leaders of the sect of ultra-leftists during the Cultural Revolution.