

白日梦
Wen Yu
Reverie



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喻
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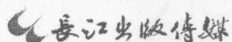
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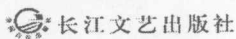
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PREFACE

When Wen Yu's mother, my former colleague, emailed me her daughter's collection of English writings under the title of *REVERIE*, I was not expecting much surprise at a few short essays that I read in the first hour. As I know that more and more Chinese teenagers have been sent to over-charging English education centers or programs to be trained to write standard English essays to get a high score for the writing section of IELTS or SAT-1. A smart and hardworking student like Wen Yu, who has been schooled in one of the oldest Foreign Language Schools in the country, would not be too much an exception for being able to write, in good English. As a professor of world literature in a Chinese university, I am often bored with writing assignments submitted to me by college freshmen who still think and write as they used to in their elementary schools. A typical teenager's composition usually has an ideologically

correct theme, well-organized parallel sentences, and frequently used quotations, which are acceptable considering the writer's lack of in-depth knowledge and full logic training, just yet. However, when an undergrad still only knows how to write in correct language format, it only highlights the writer's literature insensitivity and intellectual mediocrity. Over past decades, examination-oriented English writing class taught in China has become more and more like a foreign stereotyped genre, which is so epidemic that in a sense has degraded our English education system and made Chinese students notorious all over the world for their inability of critical and creative writing.

However, Wen Yu's writings came to amaze me with something so fresh and different when I read over the collection in next hours, especially while reading into her fictions and poetries, which requires more imagination and originality. Obviously, this smart and sensitive high school student has managed to get beyond the influence of the conventional writing samples widely taught by Chinese teachers which encourage more clichés than one's own voice. This 16-year-old girl's writings have demonstrated her wide reading of books in Chinese and English literature and her good understanding of what has happened in history. However, more importantly, she has developed her own style to write more interesting stories in a clear way and articulate vividly what she has observed


and thought by her own eyes and mind. Without any doubt, I am greatly impressed with some in-depth reflections on some challenging figures, from a TED star to a pioneer for women's suffrage rights, which are subjects seldom talked among Chinese teenagers. *A Gold Mind Man* is an imaginative and fascinating story. *A World Of Sue* is also a good and interesting story. I should admit that a few essays such as *Life is A Paradox* may be regarded as "extraordinary", in terms of perspective, focus and discourse.

Wen Yu's admiration for Oscar Wilde and her familiarity with *the Picture of Dorian Gray* remind me of a young boy who sat in my seminars on *Thinking Medieval and Shakespeare* for doctoral candidates when he was only 14 years old, just for his fanatic interest in traditional aesthetic literature. The boy has recently been admitted to the oldest high school at Vienna, because of his excellence in English and French literature and his outstanding self learning of ancient languages. It is with these young and bright students that I feel most rewarded for my teaching and passion in literature. It is in these youthful literati that I see the beauty and power of world literature. I always believe, world literature is not just a human invented form to communicate in the world, literature by itself has its own inherent sacred meaning, Literature enables us earthlings to transcend our living dimensions. In the cases of Wen Yu and her outstanding peers, wide reading of English literature has

enabled them to live elsewhere, not only physically across country borders, but also spiritually across universal domains. Actually, Wen Yu, this intelligent and diligent girl, is studying in Boston now, after her high school program in Wuhan Foreign Languages School . Whatever she may choose to pursue for her life, I wish her dreams come true soon.

As it says, In the beginning there was Word. As I say, In literature and humanity we remain faithful.

Dr.& Prof. Jianfei Zhang

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歲上

Looking Back

When I write in the dust,
I promise myself the time I look back is the last.
Go to the bar and grab a drink,
Lean over and pick up memory pieces
Along the detours we have turned.
The raindrops and sunshine beams
Seem to have graved those on the wall.
But they were much dimmer
When I suck them up from the wreckage once more.

It's hard to relieve.
Words between the lines are beyond reach.
We were young and we were in love
And we were easy to combust.
We convinced to make it forever,
But found each other next to never.

Dreams seep from night,
Swilling little diamonds off the sky,
Throwing heavy clouds
So please shade your sight.

Regrets will be your guide.

I still remind myself “the last”
Though I keep on breaking the pact.
But that’s all right
Just turn around and look back
Leave yourself an innocent smile.