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英汉对照阅读丛书·散文篇

UNCOMMON THOUGHTS ON COMMON THINGS

掠过心灵的
那阵风

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EACH SPRING, FOR MANY YEARS, I have set myself the task of writing a personal statement of belief: a Credo. When I was younger, the statement ran for many pages, trying to cover every base, with no loose ends. It sounded like a Supreme Court brief, as if words could resolve all conflicts about the meaning of existence.

The Credo has grown shorter in recent years—sometimes cynical, sometimes comical, sometimes bland—but I keep working at it. Recently I set out to get the statement of personal belief down to one page in simple terms, fully understanding the naïve idealism that implied.

The inspiration for brevity came to me at a gasoline station. I managed to fill an old car's tank with superdeluxe high-octane go-juice. My old hoopy couldn't handle it and got the willies—kept sputtering out at intersections and belching going downhill. I understood. My mind and my spirit get like that from time to time. Too much high-content information, and I get the existential willies—keep sputtering out at intersections

多年来，我给自己定下任务，每个季度写一篇个人信仰方面的文章。年轻时，我的这种文章长达数页，总想面面俱到，简直没法控制结尾，好像最高法院的法庭概要，似乎文字便可以解决生存面临的所有矛盾。

近年来，这种文章越来越短了，有时写得愤世嫉俗，有时写得令人捧腹大笑，有时又平淡如水，但我坚持下来了。现在，我开始能以简洁的语言，在一页的篇幅内写出自己的信念。我深深体味到过去那种用写作来解决实际问题的想法是多么天真。

我在加油站偶尔得到了“简洁”的灵感。我当时想方设法给我的汽车加油。那台老爷车呼呼作响的声音让人消受不了，精神紧张——它在十字路口的拐弯处发出啪啪的爆炸声，突突地冒着烟往下滑行。我明白了，我的思绪也像这样：信息量太大，使我变得无所适从。在生活的十字路口要



where life choices must be made and I either know too much or not enough. The examined life is no picnic.

I realized then that I already know most of what's necessary to live a meaningful life—that it isn't all that complicated. *I know it*. And have known it for a long, long time. Living it—well, that's another matter, yes? Here's my Credo:

ALL I REALLY NEED TO KNOW about how to live and what to do and how to be I learned in kindergarten. Wisdom was not at the top of the graduate-school mountain, but there in the sandpile at Sunday School. These are the things I learned:

Share everything.

Play fair.

Don't hit people.

Put things back where you found them.

Clean up your own mess.

Don't take things that aren't yours.

Say you're sorry when you hurt somebody.

Wash your hands before you eat.

Flush.

Warm cookies and cold milk are good for you.

Live a balanced life—learn some and think some and draw and paint and sing and dance and play and work every day some.

Take a nap every afternoon.

When you go out into the world, watch out for traffic, hold

作出这种选择的时候，我也会精神紧张，顾虑重重，不然就是茫然无措。经过思索的生活，绝不像一顿野餐那样轻松惬意。

从那时起我意识到了，要想有意义地度过一生，什么才是真正必要的。这个问题很复杂，却并不是一切。我知道这个，一直都知道。还有一个问题，那就是要好好活着，不是吗？下面是我的生活信条。

我在幼儿园就已经学会了，我应该做什么，怎样去做。智慧并不出自学历和课堂，智慧的精灵潜藏在主日学校的教诲和交往之中。下面就是我们学到的：

与人分享。

与人为善。

公平竞争。

物归原处。

敢作敢当。

不拿别人的东西。

伤害了别人说声对不起。

饭前洗手。

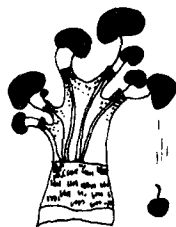
充满激情。

热饼干冷牛奶有益健康。

过一种平衡的生活——既要学习，又要思考；既要娱乐，又要工作。

睡个午觉。

出门在外，小心车辆，携手同心。



hands, and stick together.

Be aware of wonder. Remember the little seed in the Styrofoam cup: The roots go down and the plant goes up and nobody really knows how or why, but we are all like that.

Goldfish and hamsters and white mice and even the little seed in the Styrofoam cup—they all die. So do we.

And then remember the Dick-and-Jane books and the first word you learned—the biggest word of all—LOOK.

Everything you need to know is in there somewhere. The Golden Rule and love and basic sanitation. Ecology and politics and equality and sane living.

Take any one of those items and extrapolate it into sophisticated adult terms and apply it to your family life or your work or your government or your world and it holds true and clear and firm. Think what a better world it would be if we all—the whole world—had cookies and milk about three o'clock every afternoon and then lay down with our blankies for a nap. Or if all governments had as a basic policy to always put things back where they found them and to clean up their own mess.

And it is still true, no matter how old you are—when you go out into the world, it is best to hold hands and stick together.

对奇迹保持好奇心。记得在杯中撒下一粒种子的情景吗？生根、开花，人也像种子一样，生根发芽，茁壮成长。

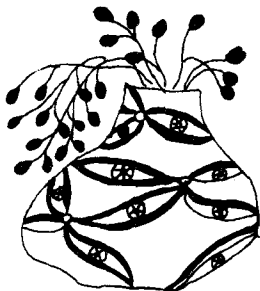
金鱼、白鼠和杯中长大的绿叶都要消亡，生命在谛听死亡的召唤，人也不能例外。

在杰克和琼的那套教科书里，你学会的第一个字，也是最重要的那个字，就是“看”——用眼睛观察。

你所需要了解的一切，幼儿园里都有。从最高行为准则到爱、基本的卫生习惯、生态学观点、政治观点、平等观念以及健康心理都有。

挑出任何一条，转化为成年人的信条，并且运用到家庭 and 工作中，运用到你的政务、你的世界，都很贴切，无懈可击。要是我们、我们整个世界，下午 3:00 吃上甜饼和牛奶、盖上毛毯，想一想，世界是多么美好。如果所有的政府，都能物归原处，把弄糟了的世界恢复原貌，并以此为基本的策略，那世界是多么美好。

不管你在生命的哪一个季节，当你走向社会时，你最好与人手拉着手，心连着心。这是千真万确的忠告。



I AM IN CHARGE OF THE LAUNDRY at our house. I like my work. It gives me a sense of accomplishment. And a feeling of involvement with the rest of the family, in a way. And time alone in the back room, without the rest of the family, which is also nice, sometimes.

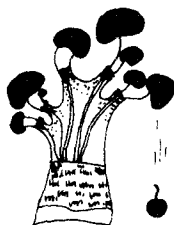
I like sorting the clothes—lights, darks, in-betweens. I like setting the dials—hot, cold, rinse, time, heat. These are choices I can understand and make with decisive skill. I still haven't figured out the new stereo, but washers and dryers I can handle. The bell dings—you pull out the warm, fluffy clothes, take them to the dining-room table, sort and fold them into neat piles. I especially like it when there's lots of static electricity, and you can hang socks all over your body and they will stick there. (*My wife caught me doing this once and gave me THAT LOOK. You can't always explain everything you do to everybody, you know.*)

When I'm finished, I have a sense of accomplishment. A sense of competence. I am good at doing the laundry. At *least*

我在家里负责洗衣的工作，我喜欢这项工作，它使我有
一种成就感，让我更加自觉地意识到我是家庭的一员。独自
一人在房间忙碌，简直妙不可言。

我喜欢把衣服按颜色分类，浅色的、深色的和介乎两者
之间的。我还喜欢调节洗衣机，冷、热、清洗、风干、定
时。我知道应该选择哪个键，操作起来得心应手。虽然我暂
时没有学会玩立体声音响，但洗衣机我已经玩得熟练自如。
干衣机铃声一响，我就提起热乎乎的衣服，摆上餐桌，分门
别类叠好。我很喜欢衣服摩擦出静电的时刻。这时，袜子变
得服服帖帖，想粘在哪里就粘在哪里。（有一次，我妻子看
见这番情景，她以异样的眼神瞧着我。你知道，你不可能解
释清楚你所做的每一件事情。）

洗完衣，一种成就感涌上心头。成就感！我至少算得上
是个洗衣的好手。洗衣还有一种宗教的体验：水、土、火，
从特别湿，到特别干，从特别热到特别冷，



that. And it's a religious experience, you know. Water, earth, fire—polarities of wet and dry, hot and cold, dirty and clean. The great cycles—round and round—beginning and end—Alpha and Omega, amen. I am in touch with the GREAT SOMETHING-OTHER. For a moment, at least, life is tidy and has meaning. But then, again. . .

The washing machine died last week. Guess I overloaded it with towels. And the load got all lumped up on one side during the spin cycle. So it did this incredible herky-jerky, lurching dance across the floor and blew itself up. I thought it was coming for me. One minute it was a living thing in the throes of a seizure, and the next minute a cold white box full of partially digested towels with froth around its mouth, because I guess I must have fed it too much soap, too. Five minutes later the dryer expired. Like a couple of elderly folks in a nursing home who follow one another quickly in death, so closely are they entwined.

It was Saturday afternoon, and all the towels in the house were wet, and all my shorts and socks were wet, and now what? Knowing full well that if you want one of those repair guys you have to stay home for thirty-six hours straight and have your banker standing by with a certified check or else they won't set foot on your property, and I haven't got time for that. So it's the laundromat over at the mall.

Now I haven't spent a Saturday night in the laundromat since I was in college. What you miss by not going to laundromats anymore are things like seeing other people's clothes and

从特别脏到特别洁净，循环往复。我在从事着一种伟大的创造。至少，生活就在那一瞬间变得整洁和干净，充满了意义，然后新一轮的循环又开始了。

上周，洗衣机出了故障。我想是在里面放了太多毛巾的缘故，甩干时衣物都卷成一堆，偏向一边，洗衣机发出强烈的震动，左摇右摆，接着就“罢工”了。这事故大概是我而起的吧。一分钟前这机器还生龙活虎地努力搅动着，一分钟后它就只是一只装满了未被完全消化的毛巾，口子上堆满泡沫的白色的冰凉的盒子了，我想我在里面放的肥皂也太多了。五分钟以后，干衣机也停止了工作。就像敬老院的老夫妻俩，一前一后离去，时间衔接得那么紧凑。

星期六下午，家里所有的毛巾都是湿的，短裤和袜子水淋淋的，怎么办？我完全明白，如果你想让修理工来修东西，你得在家里苦等 36 个小时，还得请你的开户银行派人拿着支票伺候在一旁，否则，这些老爷不会走近你一步。我没有时间等，只好把衣物拿到购物中心的洗衣房去洗。

自从进了大学，我从未在洗衣房度过周末。不再去洗衣房后，你会想念在那里能看到的五颜六色的衣服和在别的地



overhearing conversations you'd never hear anywhere else. I watched an old lady sort out a lot of sexy black underwear and wondered if it was hers or not. And heard a college kid explain to a friend how to get puke off a suede jacket.

Sitting there waiting, I contemplated the detergent box. I use Cheer. I like the idea of a happy wash. Sitting there late at night, leaning against the dryer for warmth, eating a little cheese and crackers and drinking a little white wine out of the thermos(*I came prepared*), I got to brooding about the meaning of life and started reading the stuff on the Cheer box. Amazing. It contains ingredients to lift dirt from clothes(anionic surfactants)and soften water(complex sodium phosphates). Also, agents to protect washer parts(sodium silicate)and improve processing(sodium sulfate), small quantities of stuff to reduce wrinkling and prevent fabric yellowing, plus whiteners, colorant, and perfume. No kidding. All this for less than a nickel an ounce. It's biodegradable and works best in cold water—ecologically sound. A miracle in a box.

Sitting there watching the laundry go around in the dryer, I thought about the round world and hygiene. We've made a lot of progress, you know. We used to think that disease was an act of God. Then we figured out it was a product of human ignorance, so we've been cleaning up our act—literally—ever since. We've been getting the excrement off our hands and clothes and bodies and food and houses.

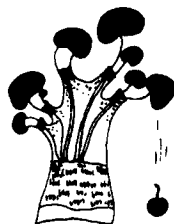
If only the scientific experts could come up with something

方听不到的许多五花八门的故事。我看到一位老妇人将许多黑色性感的内衣分类，我真想知道那究竟是不是她自己的；一位年轻人告诉他的朋友，怎样把夹克上的呕吐物清洗干净。

坐在那里等待时，我默默地注视着洗衣粉的包装盒，我用的是欢乐牌，因为我喜欢视洗衣为乐事。夜凉如水，我靠在干衣机上取暖，一边吃奶酪饼干，一边啜饮白葡萄酒（我自己带来的），仿佛也在品味着生活的美酒。无意中，我读到洗衣粉包装盒上的说明，令人惊讶的是，洗衣粉里面包括了去污的成分、柔和剂，还有保护洗衣机零件的成分，改善洗衣效果的成分，减皱、抗黄、增白，使衣物更加亮丽和芳香。说真的，洗衣粉还特别廉价。这些经过生物化合的无害物质，在冷水中功效最佳。这真是一个神奇的魔盒。

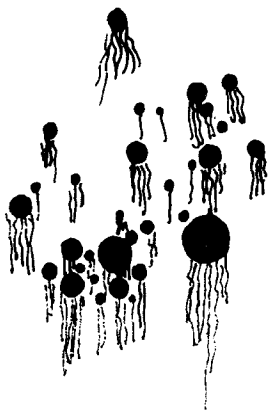
看着洗衣房老板围着机器忙碌，我联想到我们生存的世界。我们已经大大进步了。过去我们认为，疾病为上帝所为。后来我们发现，疾病是人类无知结出的苦果。所以，我们一直坚持不懈地修正恶行，洗涤尘埃——手上的、身上的、食品上的。

要是科学家能发明一种“心灵洗涤剂”该多么好。这杯



to get it out of our minds. One cup of fixit frizzle that will lift the dirt from our lives, soften our hardness, protect our inner parts, improve our processing, reduce our yellowing and wrinkling, improve our natural color, and make us sweet and good.

Don't try Cheer, by the way. I tasted it. It's awful. (*But my tongue is clean, now.*)



“洗涤剂”能清除生活中的齷齪，软化我们的冷漠和粗暴，保护我们的内部机构，改正我们的过错，美化我们的色彩，免得我们的情感“发黄”、“变皱”。让人人都善良可亲。

朋友，可别吃欢乐牌洗衣粉，告诉你，我尝过，那味道糟透了。（但我的舌头现在干净极了。）

