



美国著名作家名篇选注之二

# 热爱生命

——杰克·伦敦集

李淑言 主编

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## 杰克·伦敦简介

1876年元月12日旧金山市一位30岁出头的女钢琴教师生下一男孩，取名杰克·钱尼。孩子的生父威廉·钱尼是一位招魂术师，早在数月前已弃家出走，因为他否认这层关系并也不想负责。孩子出生8个月后母亲与老嫖夫约翰·伦敦正式结婚，杰克改随继父姓，成为杰克·伦敦(Jack London)。

旧金山是一座由淘金者建立起来的城镇，居民多是来圆发财梦的冒险者、投机者和跃跃欲试的各方来客。伦敦一家也不例外。但他们的运气不佳。在小杰克长到12岁时家境一败涂地：杂货店破产，农场和养鸡场闹瘟疫，房地产买卖赔上了全部家当。小杰克先是边读书边干活，早晚送报纸，假期在冰店和保龄球场打杂，13岁时完全辍学在罐头厂当了童工。

13岁到18岁期间杰克·伦敦大量接触了社会，他从事过多种职业但都见不到成功的曙光。他借钱买小船打劫养殖场的牡蛎，做过海岸巡视员、捕鲸船水手、黄麻厂工人、铁路电厂锅炉工等。最后他随失业大军东进欲赴华盛顿请愿，在芝加哥他脱离队伍自行流浪，在美加交界的尼亚加拉大瀑布区被捕，以游民罪在当地反省院服刑30天。

回到加州后他立志做个白领阶层的人。他重新返回学校，用3个月时间读完高一课程，通过自学于当年考入伯克利加州大学。就读一学期后因经济原因而退学，干了几个月的洗衣工后听说阿拉斯加发现了金矿，就与姐夫结伴汇入了北上淘金的人潮。一年后他两手空空回到家中，又面临选择前途的难题。通盘考虑后他立志要当职业作家。目标即定后他义无反顾地投身到自己的选择中去，以

惊人的勤奋和毅力学习和研究写作技巧和出版市场，每日练笔十多个小时，废寝忘食地阅读理论书籍。最初他的辛劳极少回报，从1898年夏到1900年初的十几个月中在他写的103篇小说中有88篇前后被各种刊物退回400多次，退稿单叠在一起有5英尺高。但他对自己的才能和毅力坚信不移，终于出现了曙光。1899年10月颇负盛名的文学杂志《大西洋月刊》发表了他的一个短篇《北方的奥德赛》。接着又有出版社收集了他的7个阿拉斯加故事出了单行本《狼之子》。从此一炮打响，他的作品成了出版社和杂志的宠儿，他实现了当作家的梦想。

自1900年第一部集子问世到1916年11月他辞世的16年间，杰克·伦敦共出版过28部长篇小说、报告文学、政论文、旅行札记和15本短篇小说集。这些数字说明了他有过人的精力、毅力和才华。

作为一个作家，杰克·伦敦的特点是以自己的信仰做主导用简单有动感的语汇句子讲述出自己的经历或听到的事情。换言之，思想性、激情、身临其境感和简洁文体是伦敦作品最基本的特征。

他的信仰是什么呢？回答很明确，那就是马克思的社会发展理论，即社会主义必将战胜资本主义。在他的政论文《我是如何成为社会主义者的》中他讲述了自己的政治信念形成的过程：青少年时期他接触社会底层的经历使得他对贫富悬殊现象深恶痛绝；重返学校后他自学了有关马克思主义的著作，惊喜地发现这是解决社会问题的金钥匙；于是在20岁时参加了美国共产党的前身社会主义劳动党，并以自己的演讲、写作和捐款等行动推动美国的社会主义事业，终生不变。他的长篇小说《铁蹄》和短篇《墨西哥人》、《强者的力量》和《槽沟之南》等明白无误地讲述了人民团结起来打倒剥削者的故事。从这个意义上说他是美国无产阶级文学的先驱。

与接受马克思主义的同时伦敦还受了当时在美国颇为流行的社会达尔文主义的极大影响。这一学派的主要理论家赫伯特·斯



宾赛以达尔文生物进化论模式解释社会现象,认为社会的不平等和压迫剥削现象是“物竞天择”、“适者生存”法则在起作用,是进化中不可避免的过程。这种思想在杰克·伦敦的作品中时隐时现。在他揭露与抨击资本主义制度的残酷性的同时往往渗杂了年轻必然战胜老年,体智力强的必然战胜体智力弱的,掌握了科学技术的西方文明必然要淘汰其它文明的无可奈何的心态与情感。这可见于他极具影响力的报告文学《深渊中的人们》,短篇《一块牛排》、《麻疯病人顾劳》、《生命的法则》等作品中。社会达尔文主义无视人改造社会解决问题的道德力量,是一种被资本主义利用了似是而非的学说。当杰克·伦敦过分强调适者生存时,他的作品往往流露出白人至上的种族主义和颂赞个人的超人哲学。

另一个主导了杰克·伦敦作品的思想是文学自然主义。这是19世纪后半叶法国作家左拉倡导的一种将研究自然科学方法引进到研究人学的运动。人被视为与动植物一样完全受环境与遗传主宰,几乎没有什么主观能动性或超越欲望可言。这种思想在伦敦早期作品中十分突出,他的两部传世之作《野性的呼唤》、《白牙》以及短篇小说《杂种巴塔得》都是描述环境塑造个性的典范故事,只是那些主角是拉橇狗而非人。

上面说过杰克·伦敦的题材大都来源于亲身经历与见闻,因此他的早期作品与加拿大淘金经历有关,或写淘金人或写极地印地安人,统称为北方故事。中期作品与他个人奋斗史类似,如他的经典之作《马丁·伊登》和短篇《叛逆》,以及随感散文集《在路上》。在他成为职业作家后,他生活中的重大事件都构成了他作品的内容,包括他几次作为战地记者赴前线的报道。其中的佼佼者是《深渊中的人们》,他以个案、数字和描述控诉了英帝国主义在自己的心脏地区——伦敦市,对下层人民压榨与忽视,使其东区等同于人间地狱。这些作品还包括他的政治活动和理想,其中的代表作是美国文学史中第一部政治预言——小说《铁蹄》,该书警告人们,资本

主义可能发展成专制恐怖统治。而他在美国中部及东部名校所做的论证资本主义必然灭亡,社会主义革命在即的演讲则收集在两本散文集中。他生活中的另外两件大事是:他两次欲出海做环球航行探险;以及他在旧金山以北的山区购置林地植树饲养,最后建成有 1500 英亩规模的农场。前者使他有可能会接触到夏威夷、南太平洋岛屿和澳大利亚的习俗文化,助他构思出几部南海故事集。后者提供他晚期几部有关农牧场生活的小说和剧本的素材。此外杰克·伦敦喜爱运动,除行船弄帆外他还多次观看拳击和斗牛,他是第一个将这两项运动作为故事题材引入到美国文学中的。

杰克·伦敦的文风是典型的美国大众文学形式。他用紧凑简短的句子结构、灵活形象的小动词加介词的短语,迅速描写出一连串的事实动作,同时又提供足够的细节使读者能勾画出情景场面,又有充足的想象空间。他那些在极端条件下向环境和个人极限挑战的故事创造出当时小说的最高销售记录,这就进一步推动了正处于萌芽状态的美国大众文化文风的巩固和发展。

杰克·伦敦又是个以心灵创作的人。作者的爱憎、褒贬、是非感倾注在字里行间。难怪评论家称他的文笔力透纸背。在历经近百年后读者仍会惊叹这些文学的感染力和宣传效果。

美国是个制造大众文化英雄和神话的地方,杰克·伦敦是个佐证。他的第一本短篇小说集就使他出了名,从此他成了传媒和读者的追逐对象,被赋予了能摧坚折锐的超人形象。读者期望他符合这形象而他也乐意从命。文化的作用在他身上体现得格外明显。尽管他是个社会主义者,但坚持个人选择,不安于稳定和常规,总要去冒险和开拓新领域的冲动始终主导着他。追逐最大、最好、最新事物,即使是难以实现的目标,既促使他成功也导致最后他几近破产、退出社会党和英年早逝的个人悲剧。在我国曾一直流传一种意见,说他在社会主义理想鼓舞下取得了成功,而个人主义膨胀后脱离了群众和党的领导致使创作枯竭以自杀解脱。这种观点既与事

实有出入又忽略了文化对人的影响,看似符合逻辑,实则过分简单化了。

至今杰克·伦敦的作品仍以十几种文字在许多国家发行着,他赞颂的积极向上的精神和大声疾呼的社会正义仍激励着一代代的读者。

本集选文是他 200 多篇故事的撷英,选材标准是语言更贴近当代,内容和写作技巧更反映作者的主流。

## 强者的力量

这是一篇以故事形式讲述社会发展史的文章，讲述者和听众仍然处于半原始的氏族社会状态，但比起他们的祖父辈来已然进化了一大截，因为他们已有了原始的社会秩序。讲述者回忆的是从混乱的群居到私有制的建立，经济阶层的分化，法律规矩的产生等。作者企图用《资本论》的观点描述历史。

本文发表于1911年3月，但却完成于1909年，作者称文章是为了反驳当时颇有名气的英国小说家吉卜林的。后者写过一篇名为《麦丽莎历险记》的寓言，宣扬如果个人组织成群体协同制止战争的话，这就意味着个人能力的退化。本文的观点是只有强者组织在一起共同发挥力量，才能显现出强者的力量。

## The Strength of the Strong

*Parables don't lie, but liars will parable.*

—Lip-King<sup>[1]</sup>

Old Long Beard paused in his narrative, licked his greasy fingers, and wiped them on his naked sides where his one piece of ragged bearskin failed to cover him. Crouched<sup>①</sup> around him, on their hams<sup>②</sup>, were three young men, his grandsons, Deer-Runner, Yellow-Head, and Afraid-of-the-Dark. In appearance they were much the same. Skins of wild animals partly covered them. They were lean and meager<sup>③</sup> of build, narrow-hipped and crooked-legged, and at the same time deepchested, with heavy arms and enormous hands. There was much hair on their chests and shoulders, and on the outsides of their arms and legs. Their heads were matted with uncut hair<sup>[2]</sup>, long locks of which often strayed before their eyes, beady and black and glittering like the eyes of birds. They were narrow between the eyes and broad between the cheeks, while their lower jaws were projecting and massive.

It was a night of clear starlight, and below them, stretching

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① crouch [kraʊtʃ] v. 蹲下

② ham [hæm] n. (兽类的)后踝

③ meager ['mi:gə] a. 瘦的,粗陋的

away remotely, lay range<sup>①</sup> on range of forest-covered hills. In the distance the heavens were red from the glow of a volcano<sup>②</sup>. At their backs yawned<sup>③</sup> the black mouth of a cave, out of which, from time to time, blew draughty gusts of wind. Immediately in front of them blazed a fire. At one side, partly devoured<sup>④</sup>, lay the carcass<sup>⑤</sup> of a bear, with about it, at a respectable distance<sup>[3]</sup>, several large dogs, shaggy<sup>⑥</sup> and wolf-like. Beside each man lay his bow and arrows and a huge club. In the cavemouth a number of rude spears leaned against the rock.

“So that was how we moved from the cave to the tree,” old Long Beard spoke up.

They laughed boisterously<sup>⑦</sup>, like big children, at recollection<sup>⑧</sup> of a previous story his words called up<sup>[4]</sup>. Long Beard laughed, too, the five-inch bodkin<sup>⑨</sup> of bone, thrust midway through the cartilage<sup>⑩</sup> of his nose, leaping and dancing and adding to his ferocious<sup>⑪</sup> appearance. He did not exactly say the words recorded, but he made animal-like sounds with his mouth that meant the same thing.

“And that is the first I remember of the Sea Valley,” Long Beard went on. “We were a very foolish crowd. We did not know the secret of strength. For, behold, each family lived by itself, and took care of itself. There were thirty families, but we got no strength from one another. We were in fear of each other all the

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- ① range [reɪndʒ] *n.* 排列, 绵亘
  - ② volcano [vɒl'keɪnəʊ] *n.* 火山
  - ③ yawn [jɔːn] *v.* 张开口
  - ④ devour [di'vaʊə] *v.* 吞没, 吃光
  - ⑤ carcass ['kɑːkəs] *n.* (兽类的)尸体
  - ⑥ shaggy ['ʃæɡi] *a.* 多粗毛的
  - ⑦ boisterously ['bɔɪstərəsli] *ad.* 骚嚷地
  - ⑧ recollection [,rekə'lekʃən] *n.* 回忆
  - ⑨ bodkin ['bɒdʒɪn] *n.* 粗针, 锥子
  - ⑩ cartilage ['kɑːtɪlɪdʒ] *n.* 软骨
  - ⑪ ferocious [fə'reɪʃəs] *a.* 凶猛的

time. No one ever paid visits. In the top of our tree we built a grass house, and on the platform outside was a pile of rocks, which were for the heads of any that might chance to try to visit us. Also, we had our spears and arrows. We never walked under the trees of the other families, either. My brother did, once, under old Boo-oogh's tree, and he got his head broken and that was the end of him.

Old Boo-oogh was very strong. It was said he could pull a grown man's head right off. I never heard of him doing it, because no man would give him a chance. Father wouldn't. One day, when father was down on the beach, Boo-oogh took after<sup>[5]</sup> mother. She couldn't run fast, for the day before she had got her leg clawed by a bear when she was up on the mountain gathering berries. So Boo-oogh caught her and carried her up into his tree. Father never got her back. He was afraid. Old Boo-oogh made faces at him.

"But father did not mind. Strong-Arm was another strong man. He was one of the best fishermen. But one day, climbing after seagull eggs, he had a fall from the cliff. He was never strong after that. He coughed a great deal, and his shoulders drew near to each other. So father took Strong-Arm's wife. When he came around and coughed under our tree, father laughed at him and threw rocks at him. It was our way in those days. We did not know how to add strength together and become strong."

"Would a brother take a brother's wife?" Deer-Runner demanded.

"Yes, if he had gone to live in another tree by himself."

"But we do not do such things now," Afraid-of-the-Dark objected.

"It is because I have taught your fathers better." Long Beard thrust his hairy paw into the bear meat and drew out a

handful of suet,<sup>①</sup> which he sucked<sup>②</sup> with a meditative<sup>③</sup> air<sup>[6]</sup>. Again he wiped his hands on his naked sides and went on. "What I am telling you happened in the long ago, before we knew any better."

"You must have been fools not to know better," was Deer-Runner's comment, Yellow-Head grunting<sup>④</sup> approval.

"So we were, but we became bigger fools, as you shall see. Still, we did learn better, and this was the way of it. We Fish-Eaters had not learned to add our strength until our strength was the strength of all of us. But the Meat-Eaters, who lived across the divide<sup>⑤</sup> in the Big Valley, stood together, hunted together, fished together, and fought together. One day they came into our valley. Each family of us got into its own cave and tree. There were only ten Meat-Eaters, but they fought together, and we fought each family by itself<sup>[7]</sup>."

Long Beard counted long and perplexedly on his fingers.

"There were sixty men of us," was what he managed to say with fingers and lips combined<sup>[8]</sup>. "And we were very strong, only we did not know it. So we watched the ten men attack Boo-oogh's tree. He made a good fight, but he had no chance. We looked on. When some of the Meat-Eaters tried to climb the tree, Boo-oogh had to show himself in order to drop stones on their heads, whereupon the other Meat-Eaters, who were waiting for that very thing, shot him full of arrows. And that was the end of Boo-oogh."

"Next, the Meat-Eaters got One-Eye and his family in his cave. They built a fire in the mouth and smoked him out, like we

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① suet [sjuɪt] *n.* (牛羊的)板油

② suck [sʌk] *v.* 吮吸

③ meditative [ˈmedɪteɪtɪv] *a.* 默想的

④ grunt [grʌnt] *v.* 咕哝

⑤ divide [dɪvaɪd] *n.* [美]分水岭



smoked out the bear there to-day. Then they went after<sup>[9]</sup> Six-Fingers, up his tree, and, while they were killing him and his grown son, the rest of us ran away. They caught some of our women, and killed two old men who could not run fast and several children. The women they carried away with them to the Big Valley.

“After that the rest of us crept back, and, somehow, perhaps because we were in fear and felt the need for one another, we talked the thing over. It was our first council<sup>①</sup>—our first real council. And in that council we formed our first tribe. For we had learned the lesson. Of the ten Meat-Eaters, each man had had the strength of ten, for the ten had fought as one man. They had added their strength together. But of the thirty families and the sixty men of us, we had had the strength of but one man, for each had fought alone.

“It was a great talk we had, and it was hard talk, for we did not have the words then as now with which to talk. The Bug made some of the words long afterward, and so did others of us make words from time to time. But in the end we agreed to add our strength together and to be as one man when the Meat-Eaters came over the divide to steal our women. And that was the tribe.

“We set two men on the divide, one for the day and one for the night, to watch if the Meat-Eaters came. These were the eyes of the tribe. Then, also, day and night, there were to be ten men awake with their clubs and spears and arrows in their hands, ready to fight. Before, when a man went after fish, or clams<sup>②</sup>, or gull-eggs, he carried his weapons with him, and half the time he was getting food and half the time watching for fear some other man would get him. Now that was all changed. The

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① council ['kaunsil] *n.* 协商, 议事机构

② clam [klæm] *n.* 蛤