

感动全美国的爱惜故事

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马爱农 译

英汉对照

岁月留痕

原名《笔记本》



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Miracles

Who am I? And how, I wonder, will this story end?

The sun has come up and I am sitting by a window that is foggy with the breath of a life gone by. I'm a sight this morning: two shirts, heavy pants, a scarf wrapped twice around my neck and tucked into a thick sweater knitted by my daughter thirty birthdays ago. The thermostat in my room is set as high as it will go, and a smaller space heater sits directly behind me. It clicks and groans and spews hot air like a fairytale dragon, and still my body shivers with a cold that will never go away, a cold that has been eighty years in the making. Eighty years, I think sometimes, and despite my own acceptance of my age, it still amazes me that I haven't been warm since George Bush was president.



奇 迹

我 是谁？这个故事将会怎样结束？我问自己。太阳升起来了，我坐在窗前，窗玻璃被一个已故的生命的呼吸弄得模糊不清。今天早上，我的样子真是滑稽古怪：两件衬衫，笨重的裤子，一条围巾在脖子上绕了两圈，然后塞进一件厚厚的羊毛衫里。这件羊毛衫是三十年前我过生日时，我的女儿亲手织好送给我的。我房间里恒温器的温度被定在最高一档。就在我身后还放着一只小型供暖器，它发出“咔嗒咔嗒”“嘎吱嘎吱”的响声，像神话故事里的巨龙一样喷吐着热气。然而我还是冷得浑身发抖，这份寒意永远无法驱除，这份寒意是八十年的岁月造成的。八十年哪，我有时候想，尽管我已经欣然接受了我的年龄，但一想到自从乔治·布什担任总统以来，我就再也没有感觉暖和过，我还是觉得非常惊诧。我不知道人到了我这个岁数是不是都

I wonder if this is how it is for everyone my age.

My life? It isn't easy to explain. It has not been the rip-roaring spectacular I fancied it would be, but neither have I burrowed around with the gophers. I suppose it has most resembled a blue-chip stock: fairly stable, more ups than downs, and gradually trending upward over time. A good buy, a lucky buy, and I've learned that not everyone can say this about his life. But do not be misled. I am nothing special; of this I am sure. I am a common man with common thoughts, and I've led a common life. There are no monuments dedicated to me and my name will soon be forgotten, but I've loved another with all my heart and soul, and to me, this has always been enough.

The romantics would call this a love story, the cynics would call it a tragedy. In my mind it's a little bit of both, and no matter how you choose to view it in the end, it does not change the fact that it involves a great deal of my life and the path I've chosen to follow. I have no complaints about my path and the places it has taken me; enough complaints to fill a circus tent about other things, maybe, but the path I've chosen has always been the right one, and I wouldn't have had it any other way.

Time, unfortunately, doesn't make it easy to stay on course. The path is straight as ever, but now it is strewn with the rocks and gravel that

有这种感觉。

我的一生？真是一言难尽。它不是我曾经幻想过的轰轰烈烈的壮观景象，但是我也没有和下三滥的人为伍，四处钻营。我猜想，我的一生极像一种热门的股票：势头比较稳定，涨的时候多，跌的时候少，循序渐进，不断上升。这笔交易做得划算，运气不错，我渐渐知道，并非每个人都能这样来评价他的一生。然而，请你们不要误会，我不是什么特殊人物，对此我很有把握。我是一个普通人，有着普通人的思想，过着普通人的生活。不会有人给我树碑立传，我的名字很快就会被世人遗忘。但是，我曾经用我的全部心血和灵魂，深深地爱过一个人。我一向觉得，仅此一点就足够了。

浪漫的人会说这是一则爱情故事，玩世不恭的人会说这是一出悲剧。在我看来，这两种说法都有道理，不管你最后对它采取什么看法，都不能改变这样一个事实：我的生活，以及我所选择的生活道路在很大程度上与它有关。我对自己的生活道路和随之而来的处境毫无怨言；也许，我对其他事情的抱怨足以塞满一个马戏团的帐篷，但我所选择的道路总是正确的，我不会有别的选择。

不幸的是，岁月悠悠，使人难以始终坚定不移。道路仍然是那么笔直，但上面布满了一辈子堆积下来的岩石和砂砾。如果是三年以前，对此置之不理

accumulate over a lifetime. Until three years ago it would have been easy to ignore, but it's impossible now. There is a sickness rolling through my body; I'm neither strong nor healthy, and my days are spent like an old party balloon; listless, spongy, and growing softer over time. \

I cough, and through squinted eyes I check my watch. I realize it is time to go. I stand from my seat by the window and shuffle across the room, stopping at the desk to pick up the notebook I have read a hundred times. I do not glance through it. Instead I slip it beneath my arm and continue on my way to the place I must go.

I walk on tiled floors, white in color and speckled with gray. Like my hair and the hair of most people here, though I'm the only one in the hallway this morning. They are in their rooms, alone except for television, but they, like me, are used to it. A person can get used to anything, if given enough time.

I hear the muffled sounds of crying in the distance and know exactly who is making those sounds. Then the nurses see me and we smile at each other and exchange greetings. They are my friends and we talk often, but I am sure they wonder about me and the things that I go through every day. I listen as they begin to whisper among themselves as I pass. "There he goes again," I hear, "I hope it turns out well." But they say nothing directly to me about it. I'm sure they think it would hurt me to talk about it so

并不困难，但现在做不到了。我浑身上下都有毛病，我既不强壮，也不健康。如今的日子就像晚会上的一只旧气球：软绵绵的毫无生气，一天天地瘪缩、疲软。

一阵干咳之后，我眯起眼睛，看了看我的手表。时间到了，我应该去了。我从窗前的椅子上站起身来，慢吞吞地穿过房间，在书桌旁停了一下，拿起那本我已读过上百次的笔记本。我没有翻看，而是把它夹在胳膊下面，然后继续朝着我非去不可的地方走去。

我走在砖地上，白底色的砖块上点缀着灰色的小点儿，就如同我的头发，如同这里大多数人的头发一样。不过今天早晨门厅里只有我一个人，他们都待在自己的房间里，唯有电视机与他们作伴。但他们和我一样，已经习惯了。只要给予足够的时间，人对任何处境都能习惯。

我听见远处传来压抑的哭喊声，我非常清楚那些声音是谁发出来的。这时，护士们看见了我，我们彼此微笑一下，交换了几句问候的话。她们都是我的朋友，我们经常聊天，但我知道，她们一定对我和我每天所做的事情感到奇怪。我走过她们身边时，她们小声地议论开了，我竖起耳朵听着。“他又去了，”我听见她们说，“我希望能有好的结果。”但她们从不直接对我说这样的话。我知道，她们肯定

early in the morning, and knowing myself as I do, I think they're probably right.

A minute later, I reach the room. The door has been propped open for me, as it usually is. There are two others in the room, and they too smile at me as I enter. "Good morning," they say with cheery voices, and I take a moment to ask about the kids and the schools and upcoming vacations. We talk above the crying for a minute or so. They do not seem to notice; they have become numb to it, but then again, so have I.

Afterward I sit in the chair that has come to be shaped like me. They are finishing up now; her clothes are on, but still she is crying. It will become quieter after they leave, I know. The excitement of the morning always upsets her, and today is no exception. Finally the shade is opened and the nurses walk out. Both of them touch me and smile as they walk by. I wonder what this means.

I sit for just a second and stare at her, but she doesn't return the look. I understand, for she doesn't know who I am. I'm a stranger to her. Then, turning away, I bow my head and pray silently for the strength I know I will need. I have always been a firm believer in God and the power of prayer, though to be honest, my faith has made for a list of questions I definitely want answered after I'm gone.

Ready now. On go the glasses, out of my pocket comes a magnifier. I put it on the table for

是觉得大清早就谈论这件事情会使我伤心，凭着我对自己的了解，我认为她们也许是对的。

一分钟后，我到达了那个房间。和往常一样，房门特意为我打开，并用东西顶住。房间里还有另外两名护士，我走进去的时候，她们也冲我露出笑容。“早上好。”她们用欢快的语气说道，我询问了几个有关孩子、学校和即将到来的假期的问题。我们提高嗓门，盖过哭喊声交谈了一两分钟。她们似乎对此听而不闻；她们已经麻木了，接着，我也麻木了。

后来，我坐在那张已经酷似我的身形的椅子上。这时她们已经料理完毕；她的衣服穿好了，但她还是哭喊不停。等她们离开以后，她就会安静一些的，我知道。早晨的忙乱场面总是令她惶恐不安，今天也不例外。最后帘子一掀，护士们走了出去。她们走过我身边时都碰了我一下，并对我报以微笑。我不知道这是什么意思。

我在那里坐了一秒钟，盯着她看，但她没有看我。这我理解，她不认识我是谁。我在她眼里是一个陌生人。然后，我移开目光，低下头去默默祈祷，但愿我能获得我所需要的勇气。我一直坚定地信仰上帝和祈祷的力量，尽管，坦率地说，我的信仰中产生了一连串问题，真希望在我死后能得到解答。

一切就绪了。我摘掉眼镜，从口袋里掏出一个放大镜。我先把它放在桌子上，开始翻动那个笔记

a moment while I open the notebook. It takes two licks on my gnarled finger to get the well-worn cover open to the first page. Then I put the magnifier in place.

There is always a moment right before I begin to read the story when my mind churns, and I wonder, Will it happen today? I don't know, for I never know beforehand, and deep down it really doesn't matter. It's the possibility that keeps me going, not the guarantee, a sort of wager on my part. And though you may call me a dreamer or fool or any other thing, I believe that anything is possible.

I realize the odds, and science, are against me. But science is not the total answer; this I know, this I have learned in my lifetime. And that leaves me with the belief that miracles, no matter how inexplicable or unbelievable, are real and can occur without regard to the natural order of things. So once again, just as I do every day, I begin to read the notebook aloud, so that she can hear it, in the hope that the miracle that has come to dominate my life will once again prevail.

And maybe, just maybe, it will.

本。我在骨节粗大的手指上舔了两下，才掀开破旧的封面，进入第一页。然后，我把放大镜放在合适的位置上。

每当我开始读故事之前，我的脑海里总要出现一阵翻腾，今天会发生奇迹吗？我问自己。我不知道，事先是不可能知道的，而且从深层次来说，这其实并不重要。促使我这么做的，是奇迹可能发生而不是肯定发生，对我来说，这就像是一种赌博。也许你会说我是一个空想家或傻瓜什么的，但我相信任何事情都有可能发生。

我意识到，机会和科学都不站在我这一边。但科学并不是绝对的答案；这我知道，这是我一辈子才弄明白的道理。它使我相信，奇迹，无论多么不可思议，多么难以理喻，都是真实的，都可以无视事物的自然规律而发生。于是，像每一个日子一样，我又开始阅读那个笔记本，我放开嗓门让她能够听见，我希望那个支配我一生命运的奇迹能够再一次奏效。

也许吧，仅仅是也许。

Ghosts

It was early October 1946, and Noah Calhoun watched the fading sun sink lower from the wraparound porch of his plantation-style home. He liked to sit here in the evenings, especially after working hard all day, and let his thoughts wander without conscious direction. It was how he relaxed, a routine he'd learned from his father.

He especially liked to look at the trees and their reflections in the river. North Carolina trees are beautiful in deep autumn: greens, yellows, reds, oranges, every shade in between. Their dazzling colors glow with the sun, and for the hundredth time, Noah Calhoun wondered if the original owners of the house had spent their evenings thinking the same things.



The house was built in 1772, making it one of

往事萦怀

那是1946年的10月初，诺亚·卡尔霍恩从他农庄式住宅的环形长廊里，凝视着夕阳缓缓西沉。他喜欢黄昏时坐在这里，特别是在劳累整整一天之后，让自己的思绪漫无目的地飘游。他通过这种方式休息，这是他从父亲那里学到的习惯做法。

他尤其喜欢凝望树木和它们在河里的倒影。深秋时节，北卡罗来纳州的树木是很美的：有绿色、黄色、红色、橙色，还有介乎其间的各种颜色。这些绚烂的色彩在阳光下辉煌夺目，诺亚·卡尔霍恩第一百次地想道：不知这幢房子最初的主人在黄昏时是否也有同样的思绪。

这幢房子建于1772年，是新伯尔尼年代最久、

the oldest, as well as largest, homes in New Bern. Originally it was the main house on a working plantation, and he had bought it right after the war ended and had spent the last eleven months and a small fortune repairing it. The reporter from the Raleigh paper had done an article on it a few weeks ago and said it was one of the finest restorations he'd ever seen. At least the house was. The remaining property was another story, and that was where he'd spent most of the day.

The home sat on twelve acres adjacent to Brices Creek, and he'd worked on the wooden fence that lined the other three sides of the property, checking for dry rot or termites, replacing posts when he had to. He still had more work to do on it, especially on the west side, and as he'd put the tools away earlier he'd made a mental note to call and have some more lumber delivered. He'd gone into the house, drunk a glass of sweet tea, then showered. He always showered at the end of the day, the water washing away both dirt and fatigue.

Afterward he'd combed his hair back, put on some faded jeans and a long-sleeved blue shirt, poured himself another glass of sweet tea, and gone to the porch, where he now sat, where he sat every day at this time.

He stretched his arms above his head, then out to the sides, rolling his shoulders as he completed the routine. He felt good and clean now, fresh. His muscles were tired and he knew he'd

规模也最大的家宅之一。它本来是一座农场的主要住宅，战争一结束，他就买下了它，并花了十一个月的时间和一小笔资金对它进行修缮。几个星期前，罗利市一家报纸的记者就此写了一篇文章，声称这是他所见过的修复得最好的建筑之一。至少这幢房子是这样的。地产的其他部分则另当别论，他每天的大部分时间都在那里劳作。

家宅占地十二英亩，坐落在布莱思河畔，他修理了地产周围三面的木栅栏，检查有没有朽木和白蚁，如果需要的话就换几根木桩。这项工作还没有完成，尤其西面的活儿更多，刚才收拾工具的时候，他提醒自己别忘了打个电话，让人再送些木材过来。他走进家门，喝了一杯甜茶，然后冲了个澡。他总是在每天工作结束后冲一个澡，水流既能洗去污垢，又能消除疲乏。

他把头发梳向脑后，穿上一条褪色的牛仔裤和一件蓝色长袖衬衫，又给自己倒了一杯甜茶，来到长廊上。现在他便是坐在这里，每天的这个时候他都是坐在这里。

他把双臂举过头顶，再伸向身体两侧，又活动活动肩膀，算是完成了全部程序。此刻，他感到舒坦、干净，神清气爽。浑身的肌肉很疲劳，他知道