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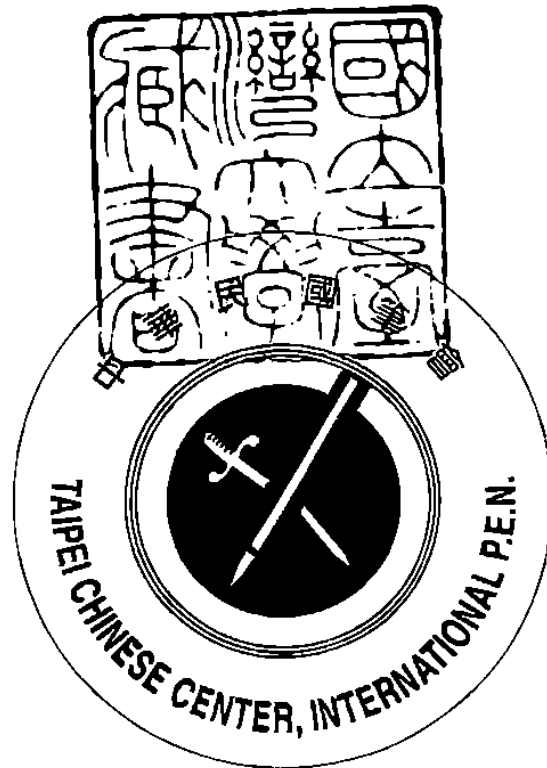


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4th Floor, 4, Lane 68, Wenzhou Street, Taipei, Taiwan 10660, Republic of China

Tel: (886-2) 2369-3609 Fax: (886-2) 2369-9948

E-mail: taipen@tpts5.seed.net.tw

<http://www.taipen.org>

中華民國臺灣臺北市溫州街68巷4號4樓

The Taipei Chinese Center, International PEN

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YEN Na 顏訥

**WHEN THERE'S NO NEED TO TAKE BETRAYAL
SERIOUSLY**

當背叛無須沉重以對的時候*

Translated by Darryl STERK 石岱崙

Waiting is a river, an endlessly rolling river. I crouch on the other shore of the river, watching and waiting: watching the breakers tear at the shore and roll themselves into heaps of snow, and waiting for your face to appear as the seething spray disperses.

It is noon. From the zenith, the sun sprays down a brutal light. I am curled up in a small lane in a café. The name of the café is Spring Field—the dark green sign hanging outside the window sparkles in the sun. It is quiet in here; the café crouches at the end of the lane like a cat, opening its maw lazily and enclosing the people inside as they chat, or wait.

Here, time is the sand from a broken hourglass. Spilt all

* From *Lien-ho wen-hsueh* 《聯合文學》 (*UNITAS—A Literary Monthly*), No. 286, August 2008: 160-168.

over the floor, it slowly rolls away, impossible to keep track of. It's like a vacuum in here, but it isn't that the air has been sucked out but rather that the tracks of time's passing have been removed. As a result, the restlessness I feel while waiting abates. I calm down, like the slowly cooling cup of caramel latte on the table.

On the table before me is a still steaming cup of caramel latte, Milan Kundera's *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, which I'm halfway through, a Muji "no name brand name" notebook with a black cover, and a freshly sharpened, pale yellow pencil. In the time I spend waiting, I want to write a story about betrayal, a story in which I record all the doubts about love you have inspired in me over nearly a year of dawns and dusks.

I also intend to betray my past self: this is the pose I am adopting as I wait. My freshly permed tresses are still poofed up in this windless air-conditioned room. My formerly pale face is now highlighted, marked with Lancôme eyeliner and globbed with Anna Sui mascara. Mary Quant has polished each of my nails to a unique hue. I've been almost running on empty trying to powder myself into a statue, an appearance that is no longer me. And now, through a pane of glass, I'm watching for you to appear in the lane and walk my way.

When we met, I was by myself in a wilderness expanse. You were passing through. With buoyant self-assurance, you walked my way.

Before you tromped so tempestuously into my life, I had lost my bearings, after M had stabbed me pitilessly with the blade of betrayal. In those dark days, I seemed to be standing alone in the middle of a limitless waste. All my faith in human

nature and love had been dashed and scattered. But just as God made the world in seven days, so you, shining like a sun of “hope” and “eternity,” needed only seven days to make my chilly waste of faith blossom once more.

“You seemed a child to me, a child someone had put in a bulrush basket daubed with pitch and sent downstream for me to fetch at the riverbank of my bed.”

You tapped me playfully on my forehead and borrowed a metaphor from Milan Kundera’s *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, one Tomáš uses on Tereza.

Tereza, soft and naked, curled up in a bamboo basket, floated along the shoreless river of Tomáš’s life. Tossing on the waves, Tereza looked so fragile that Tomáš could not resist picking her up. Out of a powerful “sympathy,” the inveterate drifter Tomáš was only ever able to enjoy a woman’s “sexual companionship.” At the same time, he was impetuous, so much so that he could never tell whether the feeling surging inside him was love or madness! All he wanted to do was take Tereza in his arms and fantasize about holding her hand and rowing her across the ocean of human existence. Cheek to cheek, they would at last arrive at their final haven, their ultimate anchorage.

From that time on, I fell totally under the sway of your metaphor. I felt that Tereza had leaped off the page, that I was her earthly incarnation. Curled up in a bamboo basket, I drifted along the boat lane that led into your harbor. Sitting on the shore of your bed, you couldn’t resist scooping me up and telling me all my worries were over: you would piece together my shattered faith, shard by shard, and make it whole again.

Then you said, irresistibly, that it was karma. Having observed my fragility and helplessness, the only permits I needed for anchorage in your harbour, you were more than willing to

overcome any obstacle to reach the wasteland where I was standing forlorn.

But today you still haven't appeared in the lane, walking my way.

Someone appears, easing through a fissure in the sunlight and gliding towards me. It isn't you but a girl with short hair, a thick book under her arm and a backpack on one shoulder. I know we've never met, but I see her standing outside the glass partition, her hair tousled by the wind, her lips slightly parted, and feel an indescribable, almost visceral sense of déjà vu.

She pushes her way in, chooses without hesitation the seat across from me, and plonks her book down on the table: Ah! *Anna Karenina*. Her tender fingers grasp the edge of it neurotically—the way I used to need to hold my blanket to get to sleep at night as a child. She looks up, her black pupils tremulous, as if the slightest sound would startle her: her appearance is strangely stifling. I seem to see this strange girl as an infant curled up in a bulrush basket, drifting along on the waves. I look down at *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, its pages flipping in a draft, and the sense of familiarity wells suddenly up again. I almost feel we must know each other very well.

Yes, with *Anna Karenina* tucked under her arm and a backpack on one shoulder, she is just like Tereza searching for Tomáš in Prague.

"Tereza, is that you?" I can't help saying, surprising even myself with my rash revelation.

She doesn't respond. She simply opens her gleaming eyes and, in a non sequitur, says: "On the surface, an intelligible lie; underneath, the unintelligible truth showing through." That's

what Tomáš's mistress Sabina says to Tereza in *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*. But what does that have to do with this girl? And why has she so enigmatically waltzed with *Anna Karenina* into my solitary vigil? Perhaps this world has become like a network without borders. Or have people always had encounters as surreal as this one? Who can ever really tell whether every moment of awareness is the real thing or just a fantasy?

"Don't you get it?" the strange woman asked, her eyes abruptly narrowing. "The reason why Tomáš is unwilling to abandon his sexual companionships is because he lacks the self-control—he can't resist sampling other women. And there's no need for him to control himself." She was still clutching her book anxiously, like me as a child holding my blanket at night to be able to get to sleep.

She lowers her head and trembles with agitation. Again, I seem to see her curled up in a bulrush basket pitching to and fro on violent waves. But then, looking more closely, I notice that she isn't alone in the basket. Beside her, fists clenched, riding the waves, there is another: me.

When was it that the flood of your betrayal first hit me, filling my days with fear as I tried to navigate the raging river?

Everything started when you stood at the riverbank of your bed and used that marvellous metaphor to fetch me up.

From that moment on, I was as if drunk. My two prior love affairs had ended in infidelity; I had had to share my boyfriend's body with another woman. But even though it sounded like a line from a soap opera, I still believed your assurance was sincere.

Perhaps, as Milan Kundera says, metaphors are dangerous, for "a metaphor can plant a seed of love."

Yes, a metaphor can plant a seed of love. When, word by word, you typed “hold my hand, and take me away while I’m still hesitating” into our MSN Messenger chat window, a seed of love started sprouting in my heart. When you used your mouse to draw a left hand in the chat window, I couldn’t wait to extend you my right; I longed to build an indestructible sanctuary with a shrine to your “eternal pledge.” I would prostrate myself before it daily.

But the plot of the soap opera of our relationship unfolded. I inadvertently discovered that in your computer there was, like a winking yellow eye, an innocent-looking folder that at two clicks of the cursor magically opened to reveal a hall of wonders. The curiosities on display were Word files, arranged in rows in alphabetical order. For each file there was a photograph diligently attached. Each was named for a girl—Ashley, Betty, Celia and so forth. Naturally, the contents were MSN Messenger chat records, all typed in 12 point New Ming Light and all composed in an erotic yet ambiguous language. Every girl’s moniker was Baby modified by the adjective “cute.” Every sentence ended in a scarlet heart.

I was like a peasant woman in the big city. Having stumbled into a magnificent hall of wonders, she gazes rapt at the rows of curiosities, trembling in spite of herself. Then, among the files, I found one with my moniker—“Sophia.” This was my exclusive showcase. But there was nothing special about the curiosity in this display. I discovered that the girl who in your words was so unique you had to fetch her up out of the flood and spend “an eternity” building an anchorage for her was just another pretty letter of the alphabet. I was just another file in the folder, a file of digital love with a photograph and chat text

in New Ming Light.

You finally admitted what you are: a hunter, a hunter who never has to sweat in pursuit of his prey. You simply sit in front of your lightweight notebook and start gracefully tapping on the keyboard; soon, by fiber optics, what you type is disassembled and recomposed into a suggestive message. Then you get the thrill of watching your quarry walk right into your trap.

The Internet has built for us a world without walls. But then everything becomes too easy. All you need to do is sit, move your fingers a bit, and within the space of a second you can race down the street towards the sea in the famous scene from Truffaut's masterpiece *The Four Hundred Blows*. In the moment the young hellraiser Antoine Doinel looks back, you say, "Bonjour!" Or, you can stroll down a glitzy boulevard whose frontage is pieced together from brand name boutiques like Fendi, Celine and Coach. The Internet has also wiped out borders in the world of fashion. With a simple double click of the mouse, Chanel's brand new Chance line of perfumes will drop instantly into your virtual shopping cart, and Coco Chanel's smiling face will appear at the side of the screen to announce: "The old world has faded out. The curtain will soon rise on a new millennium." Three days later, a courier carrying a package of clear yellow bottles will fulfill his pressing mission by pressing your doorbell. What's even more enticing is being able after a minute's installation of MSN Messenger to open several chat windows at once and effortlessly carry on multiple simultaneous love affairs. To prevent a jealous husband or wife from finding signs of his or her significant other's ongoing romances in letters hidden around the house, you can simply spend a couple of minutes applying for an online photo album and copy a generic paragraph of sweet nothings with a link to your album to differ-

ent message boards.

Now that everything's gone digital, we start to seem like octopuses grasping out every which way at the things we desire. In this way, whatever in life was once unbearably heavy becomes light as air. When desiring is so easy, even love becomes something to copy-and-paste. Even love can become virtual. When it does, we no longer fear betrayal or loss, because what we betray is just a promise we pastiched in New Ming Light, and when we lose something we can easily get another.

So in this era when everything is light as floating dust, when even betrayal doesn't need to be taken seriously, what is worth caring about or fearing?

Her head still lowered, the stranger remains silent while the look in her eyes ties itself in a knot of fear. Fists clenched, she is like a drowning woman clutching a piece of driftwood, the only thing she has to hang on to in a sea of change—she'd never let go.

But in an age when we don't fear loss or cherish what we have, what does this woman with *Anna Karenina* have to be afraid of?

In the silence, I gaze out the window. The sunlight off the hanging sign is no longer so dazzling; the sunset tints the white lettering a beguiling golden—Spring Field. Holding my pencil in my left hand, I absentmindedly doodle in my notebook. Then I try to sit up straight in my big, round wicker chair, in the hope of catching a glimpse of you treading on the shadows of the lane, walking my way.

But I still don't see your shadow long in oblique light of the setting sun.

The stranger sitting opposite me breaks the silence. In a mournful tone, she begins, haltingly: "I went to Tomáš's so that I could have a unique, irreplaceable body all to myself. But he kissed me the same way he kissed other women. He touched us all in the same way. He treated my body and theirs indiscriminately."

The veins on her hands bulge as she grasps the edge of the table, just like me as a child holding my blanket to be able to get to sleep.

Upon discovering that you went around with an arrow in your bow, always on the prowl for enticing female curves, I relapsed into my childhood habit. Now I had to hold a piece of your clothing or some part of your body to be able to doze off, to give myself the strength to keep the nightmares—always of you writhing with one strange female body after another—at bay.

Then the stranger tells me about her recurrent nightmare, in which she walks in a rank and file of naked women, all of them identical and all on display. For a moment I am confused: I can't tell whether this nightmare filled with tumid nude female bodies is hers or mine.

I couldn't help it: I started spying on you. The first time I discovered a secret message from you, which you had sent to me and I had assumed was for me alone, on the message board of some other girl, I changed into a keen-nosed hound hunting you in the forest of the Internet. Day in, day out, I tracked you

on the web. Exhausted, I was too intent to stop. Relying on Google's networking wizardry as well as my own patience in painstaking password cracking, I managed to reach the scene of the hunt in time to witness you using New Ming Light to quicken the heartbeats of different girls. I copied all the evidence to my computer. If those girls who responded to you in an erotically suggestive way were your prey, then this digital documentation of your equally suggestive flirtations was mine.

Since then, by day I've been hysterically hounding down your every suggestive clue; and by night, I've been hounded by the same nightmare, over and over. It's like a poison necklace around my neck: it's choking me, but I can't get it off.

In the dream, I stand outside your door, clutching the keys to your place, a prerogative I've never had in real life. Thrilled, I sneak into your secret space—a bachelor pad of five *ping*, just under two hundred square feet. There you are, breathing defencelessly in the darkness. Gingerly, I turn on your computer, trying not to make a sound. I anxiously but adeptly find the hall of wonders containing your amorous annals and start examining the folders one by one. Finally, among the many trophies, I find a list I have never laid eyes on of dozens of names, all of them of girls you've been intimate with. For each, you've detailed the sexual act, both the scene and the orgasmic response, and giving it a rating. I see my own name among the others. I'm in the middle somewhere, not at the top of the ranking, and there isn't any special comment. Knees shaking, I feel like all the energy has been drained out of me, as if I lack the strength even to reach out and turn off the monitor. All I can do is sit there, silently hysterical, and stare at my rating, an index of

my mediocrity.

As I am doing so, the smiling faces of those girls escape en masse from the confines of the folder and surround me. They're all showing off the curves of their exposed bodies, curves you have always touched with the same caress. I stand in the center of the circle and look down despondently at my own, equally unclad flesh. I finally realize that to you I am just another bare female form, just one more name in your little black notebook.

Since then, my waking hours have been like something out of virtual reality and at night in my dreams I've been feeling real physical pain. Perhaps telling appearance and reality apart has never been easy!

What's in a name? This world is a semiotic construct. With symbols, anything can be juxtaposed with anything else. Of course, anything can be replaced or invented whenever you want. But are there eternal essences behind the symbols? You may discover, for instance, that by Googling your own name you get upwards of a hundred hits. All of the hits will highlight the same name, but (even if all the hits refer to the same person) your name is actually shared by your many different identities. Which one of them is the real you? Or does anyone still care who she is anymore? The Internet creates a seemingly multifarious world, but somehow in it everybody loses his true colors.

Gradually, we have gotten used to interacting with people through the computer screen. Log into MSN Messenger and everyone's face, pretty or plain, is fitted into the same small window. Even more convenient, to smile these days all you do is send a smiley face or another emoticon conveying your precise feeling. But after closing the display, no authentic image of the other remains in memory, no upward curve of lip or salty

smell of tears. You can also log into e-mail, spend a few minutes typing out a message that seems infused with true emotion and send it to a selected number of contacts in a matter of seconds. Thirty days later, your sent message folder will automatically be emptied. It all seems so squeaky-clean, as if nothing ever really happened.

In an era in which individuality is underscored, we all compose ourselves in the same typeface. Instead of faces, we now have facades that, like pop idols singing on the stage, flare and vanish like shooting stars. All women represent to you and Tomáš are so many differently odored or scented bodies. After exchanging bodily fluids with a woman, your memory is automatically sluiced and sieved. In the end, all that remains is a list of ratings in a folder. Among the many names, there is never any particularity to speak of, let alone individuality, so that betrayal becomes the mere exchange of one name for another, an act of thoughtless levity.

Softly, the stranger pushes her chair back, gets up and says: "Maybe the reason why we are unable to love is because we are so eager to be loved."

Then she tucks her thick copy of *Anna Karenina* under her arm and shoulders her backpack, as when we first met. As she leaves, her black hair trails in space behind her head in a slight arc that fades into the night.

Why a strange girl with the same experience and dream as me would barge into the solitude of my waiting is beyond me. Is this world really a borderless network, after all? Is interpersonal experience really so surreal, and fantasy and reality so hard to tell apart?

As I wonder, the sign outside the full-length window lights up like a twinkling star, the first to be seen in the lane. And as I

finish up my cold caramel latte, it suddenly occurs to me: if you always live in expectation—of permanence, loyalty, or appreciation of your uniqueness—then you might as well let others make all your judgments for you. In expectation, we miss the beauty of the moment. When all our expectations come to naught, they start to burden us, the unbearable heaviness of being. I look down and see that the first page of my Muji notebook is, except for a few doodles, still blank. I close it: I was going to fill it with a record of your various infidelities, but now I don't feel any need.

Gazing out into the lane, I realize I have spent the whole afternoon waiting for you in vain. But strangely, I feel lighter than ever, as if I have put down a heavy load. After I get home, I get out my makeup remover and restore myself to my true countenance. I recall the look in that girl's eye, so lucid and vulnerable, and ponder all the things she said. It doesn't matter anymore whether she was Tereza or Sabina, or whether she even really existed. This world really is a borderless network! Interpersonal experience has always been surreal.

Waiting is a river, an endlessly rolling river. But now I'm no longer expecting a glimpse of your face to appear as the seething spray disperses.

當背叛無須沉重以對的時候*

顏訥

等待是一條滾滾長河，沒有終點。我蹲坐在河岸彼端，看驚濤裂岸捲起千堆雪，期待蒸騰的水氣消散之後，會是你逐漸清晰的臉孔。

12：00，日光猛烈地從世界的頂端噴灑下來。我蜷縮在小巷內的一家咖啡店——「Spring Field」，春田，墨綠色招牌懸掛在窗外，被陽光炫出數個刺眼的光點。這是一家無聲無息，蹲伏在小巷內的咖啡店，貓般慵懶地張開了口，包覆著正在歡敘或等待的人們。

在這裡，時間是打破的沙漏，散落一地，緩緩滾動，讓人無法計算。因此，在這樣一個仿若真空的地方，被抽離的不是空氣，而是時間流轉的軌跡；讓等待過程中的躁動，隨著桌上那一杯焦糖拿鐵，緩緩冷卻。

此刻，在我面前的桌上，除了兀自冒著蒸氣的焦糖拿鐵，還擺放

*原載於《聯合文學》第286期，2008年8月號，頁160-168。

了一本正閱讀到一半，米蘭·昆德拉的《生命中不能承受之輕》、一本黑色封皮的MUJI筆記本，以及一枝剛剛削過的淺黃色鉛筆。在這段等待的時間裡，我將要寫一篇關於背叛的小說，記錄你在三百多個日昇日落間，所留給我對愛的疑惑。

我也打算背叛過去的自己，來做為這場等待的姿態。新燙的長捲髮，在無風的冷氣房裡依然張揚著；以往總是空白的眼瞼，現在已被Lancome眼線筆塗滿，再厚厚地刷上Anna Sui睫毛膏；並且用Mary Quant指甲油，在十個指頭上分別開出十種不同的繽紛色彩。我幾乎是過度汲汲營營，想要將自己粉飾成一尊不再是自己的雕像，然後透過一整片玻璃帷幕，等待你穿過巷口，向我走來。

我們相識的時候，你就是穿過我獨自身處的曠野，高昂著自信，向我走來。

在你暴風似地踏近之前，我正因為M毫不留情地持著背叛之刃向我劈來而頓失生命的座標。那段黑暗的時日裡，我彷彿孤身站在無邊的曠野，所有對人性以及愛情的信仰，都被擊碎而消散了。但是，正如上帝花了七天的時間創造世界，你也只花了七天的時間，就捧著滿懷名為「希望」與「永恆」的日光，將我已荒涼的信仰之原，重新映照得欣欣向榮。

「妳就像是一個孩子，被人放在樹脂塗覆的草筐裡順水漂來，而我在床榻之岸順手撈起了妳。」

你輕輕在我額頭敲了一下，引用米蘭·昆德拉《生命中不能承受之輕》書中，湯馬士對特麗莎的比喻。

特麗莎以柔軟而赤裸的姿態，蜷縮在竹籃裡，順水漂進湯馬士生命中的無岸之河。長河滾滾，特麗莎在波濤中顯得如此脆弱，因此湯馬士無可抗拒地將她撈起。因著強烈的「同情」，始終只與女人保持「性友誼」的浪子湯馬士，卻衝動得無法分辨那股波動的情緒究竟是愛還是瘋狂！他唯一想做的，就是立即將特麗莎緊抱在臂彎中，幻想著能夠握住她的手，划過漫漫人生，並且在盡處的港灣，頭靠著頭，做最終的停泊。

自此以後，我便完全傾倒在這樣一個比喻之下，相信自己就是特麗莎從紙上躍然而出的化身，也蜷縮在竹籃中，順著航道漂進你的港埠。而你就坐在床榻之岸，無可抗拒地將我撈起，告訴我毋須再有擔憂；因為你會用手將我已然破碎的信念，一片一片拼回原形。

然後你說，無可抗拒，是因為命中注定；脆弱和無助，則是我能停泊於你的港灣唯一的通行證，並且讓你願意穿過一切阻礙向我孤身而立的荒原走來。

然而此刻，你卻仍未穿過巷口，向我走來。

穿過陽光縫隙，朝我輕步滑來的卻是一名蓄著短髮的女子，肩上斜掛背包，腋下夾著一本厚厚的書。我確信自己與她並不相識；但是，當她站在咖啡店的玻璃帷幕外，任由髮絲在風中潑灑，然後輕緩地咧咧嘴。那瞬間，我卻有一種不可名狀的熟悉感，從腹部升起。

她推開門走進來，毫不考慮地選擇了我對面的座位。砰地將那本書放在桌上，啊！《安娜·卡列尼娜》。她柔嫩的手指神經質地握住

書緣，如同我兒時總必須緊抓著棉被的邊緣，才能安心入睡，然後，一抬眼，她黑色的瞳孔便輕緩地晃蕩著，使人不自覺地屏息而對，好像稍有聲音，就會使她受到驚嚇。我彷彿看見面前的陌生女子，以嬰孩的姿態蜷縮在草筐裡，隨波濤漂蕩。我低頭望著桌前那本隨風跑動頁數的《生命中不能承受之輕》；霎時間，一股強烈的熟悉感湧上，我幾乎覺得我們應該彼此熟識。

是的，她腋下的《安娜·卡列尼娜》、肩上的提包，正是特麗莎來到布拉格找尋湯馬士時的姿態。

「特麗莎，是你嗎？」我衝口而問，連我自己都為了這樣魯莽的靈感而驚訝。

她沒有回答，只是睜著晶亮的眼睛，說了一句似乎毫不相關的話：

「表面的東西是明白無誤的謊言，下面卻是神秘莫測的真理。」

這是《生命中不能承受之輕》裡，情婦薩賓娜對特麗莎說過的話。但是，這與她是誰有什麼關係呢？而她又為什麼要帶著一本《安娜·卡列尼娜》，莫名其妙地闖入我原本孤獨的等待之中呢？或許，這世界就像是一個沒有邊界的網路，人與人之間的遭遇，是否從來都這般荒謬！誰能確定自己每一所在的時刻究竟是真實還是虛幻？

「你知道嗎？湯馬士不願意拋棄性友誼，是因為他無力控制自己不去品味其他女人，也沒有控制的必要。」陌生女子忽然眯著眼睛說，雙手神經質地緊抓著書緣，就如同小時候，我必須緊抓著棉被邊緣才能安心入睡一樣。

那一刻，我好像又看見眼前低著頭，激動得有些顫抖的女子，蜷縮在草筐中，被狂暴的波濤上下推弄著。然而，仔細一看，卻發現草筐之中不只躺著一個女子；在她身旁，緊握著拳頭，隨波起伏的人，竟然是我。

究竟你的背叛，是從什麼時候開始衝激著我，使我鎮日惶惶如航行於驚濤裂岸之河？

這一切都始於你站在床榻之岸，用了一個美妙的比喻，將我撈起。

在那一刻之後，我就彷彿飽飲了烈酒。兩次戀情的結尾，都得和另一個女子分享同一具男體，但我竟依然相信你信誓旦旦的保證；即使那和所有肥皂泡沫劇的對白並無不同。

或許，正如米蘭·昆德拉所說，比喻是危險的言語，「一個比喻就能播下一粒愛的種籽。」

一個比喻就能播下一粒愛的種籽。在你透過MSN那一小方視窗，用鍵盤一字一字輸入：「拉起我的手，趁我還在猶疑時帶我走」時，愛的種籽就開始萌芽、茁壯了。於是，當你接著在視窗中用滑鼠畫出一隻左手，我內心早就已經迫不及待地向你伸出右手，並且為你的「永恆保證」建造一座不毀的神殿，將它供奉起來，日日膜拜。

然而，劇情發展也正如最肥皂泡沫的連續劇，我有意無意地發現，在你電腦中眨著黃色眼睛、看似單純的資料夾，只要用游標點兩下，就會變魔術似地展開一座座博物館。館內的珍藏是整齊排列的Word檔，檔案以不同女孩的英文名字命名，Ashley、Betty、

Celia……，按照字母從A到Z有系統地存放，並精心附上照片。當然，內容是由意義模糊的字句，拼貼而成的MSN通話紀錄，一律以12級的新細明體，組合出充滿情欲曖昧的言語。每一個女孩的代碼都是「寶貝」，前面的形容詞都加上「可愛的」，並且一視同仁地用鮮紅的心形符號做為句點。

我像是剛到城市的村婦，踏進雄偉的博物館裡，在一排排嘆為觀止的收藏品前傻了眼，顫抖得不能自己。然後，在依照字母排列的檔案中，找到了名為「Sophia」，那個專屬於我的展示櫃。於是發現，在你口中獨一無二，讓你必須從激流中撈起，用「永恆」建造一座港灣供我停泊的女孩，其實也和其他字母的女孩無異；只不過是資料夾中，由一張張圖片和12級的新細明體所組成的數位愛情檔案。

你終於承認自己是獵人，卻從來不用揮汗追逐獵物。你只要坐在輕薄短小的筆記型電腦前，優雅地敲著鍵盤，透過光纖分裂又重組曖昧的文字，就可以享受獵物自投陷阱的快感。

網路為我們建構了一個沒有圍牆的世界。於是，一切都變得太容易，我們只消坐著，動動手指，就能夠在一秒之內，奔跑於法國電影大師楚浮《四百擊》中通往海岸的道路上，並且在小男孩安瑞那著名的回眸一望時，說一聲：「Bonjour!」；或者緩步走在由Fendi、Celine、Coach拼成的五彩大道上。網路讓時尚更無國界，移動游標點兩下，Chanel全新「Chance系列」香水就馬上掉入虛擬購物車中，而CoCo Chanel微笑的面孔正在一旁高呼：「舊有的世界正臨尾聲，新紀元即將展開」；三天後，澄黃瓶身的香水，就會由「宅急便」使命必達地按下電鈴；更讓人醉心的是，只要花一分鐘安裝上「MSN Messenger」，我們就能同時開啟數個視窗，輕鬆地兼顧好幾場不同

的戀愛。或者，再花半分鐘申請網路相簿，複製同一段綿綿情話，隨心所欲地貼在不同留言版上，如此就不會再有嫉妒的妻子或丈夫，從對方密藏的書信中找到外遇的蛛絲馬跡。

在一切都被數位化之後，我們開始像八爪章魚一樣，坐著就能夠從四面八方抓取想要的東西。於是，生命中原本沉重得難以負荷的一些事物，便漸漸輕飄了起來。當我們總是能夠輕易地欲其所欲，連愛情都可以複製、貼上，甚至虛擬。那麼，我們便不怕背叛，也不怕失去；因為背叛的只是用12級新細明體所拼湊而成的誓約，失去的也總能夠再輕易得到。

那麼，在這個一切都輕如浮塵，連背叛也無須沉重的年代，還有什麼是值得在乎、懼怕的呢？

陌生女子低著頭，默默的，眼神卻糾結成恐懼的弧線。雙手緊握，像是瀕臨溺水之人，好不容易抓到瞬息萬變中唯一不變的浮木，就再也不願放開了。

然而，在這樣一個不怕失去，更不珍惜所有的時代，她還在恐懼什麼呢？

我在靜默中，透過落地玻璃窗向外凝望，懸掛著的招牌已不再閃爍刺眼的光芒。黃昏的陽光塗抹在「Spring Field」白色的字體上，渲染了醉人的金黃。我左手緊握著鉛筆，無意識地在空白筆記本上塗鴉，然後企圖籐編的大圓椅上坐直身軀，盼望你會踩著影子，從巷口向我走來。

然而，我仍舊沒有在夕陽斜照的巷口，找到你拉長的影子。

坐在對面的陌生女子，這時敲碎了沉默，以哀傷的聲調緩緩地說：

「我到湯馬士那裡，是為了使自己有個獨一無二、不可取代的軀體。但是，他還是吻我和其他女人一個樣，撫摸我們一個樣，對待我以及她們的身體無所分別。」

她雙手幾近青筋暴露地緊抓桌沿，正如同我兒時總得緊抓著棉被邊緣，才能安心入睡。

在發現你總是揚著弓，向眾多誘人的女體曲線獵食後，我就重拾了兒時的習慣。總要在安睡之前，緊抓著你的衣角，抑或是你身體的任何一個部分。如此，我才有力量去抵抗侵入睡眠中的惡夢，幻影幢幢，全都是你和一具具陌生女體的糾纏。

然後，陌生女子告訴我，她經常做的惡夢，是和一排排女人赤身裸體地走在一起，毫無差別地排隊展示。我頓時迷惑了，分不清每一夜充滿潮濕女體的惡夢，究竟是屬於我的還是她的？

我開始無法控制自己不去窺伺你的祕密。第一次發覺你給我的祕密留言，卻出現在另一個女孩的網路留言版上時，我就變成一隻嗅覺靈敏的獵犬，皺著鼻子穿梭在網路森林中。每一天，沉重但欲罷不能的，就是追尋你所留下的痕跡。靠著神通廣大的Google搜尋網站，以及需要極大耐心的密碼測試，我得以在第一時間趕到狩獵現場，親眼目睹你用新細明體勾動不同女孩的心跳。然後，我將它一一複製到自

己的電腦中。如果你的獵物，是那些女孩們情欲曖昧的回應；那麼我的獵物，就是你和不同對象卻同樣曖昧調情的證據。

於是，白日，我繼續發狂似地做一隻獵犬，務必抓牢你每一絲曖昧的線索。夜晚，則一遍又一遍經歷著同樣的夢境；那夢境像一條惡毒的項圈，勒住我的脖子，毫無掙脫的辦法。

夢中，我緊握著你套房的鑰匙，那是現實生活中從未擁有過的權利。然後，滿漲著興奮地潛入你五坪大小的私密之地。昏暗中，你吐納著沒有防備的鼻息；而我已悄悄開啟電腦，緊張但熟練地找到你的情史博物館，仔細檢查每一個資料夾。終於，在眾多戰利品當中，有一張名單，我從未見過，上面列出了數十個女孩的名字，都曾與你有過親密關係。你詳細註明每一次做愛的地點，高潮時的反應，最後逐一評定等第。於是，我發現自己的名字也擠身其間，既非最高等，也無特出的描述。我顫抖著雙腿，全身力氣彷彿已被抽乾，甚至抬不起手關掉螢幕，只能激動地瞪視著數十個名字之間，毫不起眼的自己。

然後，那些女孩微笑的面孔，就在夢裡紛紛掙脫了資料夾的束縛，包圍住我，向我展示她們不同弧度，卻被你同樣手勢撫摸的裸體。而我站在她們之中，反視自己同樣袒裊的身軀，沮喪著；終於明瞭對你來說，我只不過也是其中的一具女體，你備忘錄裡眾多名字之一而已。

於是，我在現實生活中有著虛擬世界的幻覺；在夢境之中卻又感到具體而真切的痛苦。也許，這世界本就虛實難辨！

名字又代表什麼呢？這是一個用符號建構出來的世界，所有事物都能夠用符號拼湊，當然也能夠隨時替換和捏造。那麼在符號之下，是否還有恆定不變的實體？當我們發現，只要在Google搜尋網站上鍵入自己的名字，就能輕易搜尋到上百筆資訊，它們都標示同一個名字，卻分屬許多個不同身分的人，而哪一個才是真正我自己呢？然而，又有誰在乎誰是誰？網路為我們創造了一個看似多樣的世界；但是在虛幻之中，每一個人卻都失去自己真實的面目。

於是，我們漸漸習慣透過螢幕和人相處，只要登入MSN Messenger，每一個人的臉龐，不論美醜，都化作同樣尺寸的視窗。更方便的是，當我們微笑，只需按下表情符號，就能夠精確地傳達情緒。但是，關掉視窗之後，記憶中卻不會有對方嘴唇上揚的弧線或淚水鹹濕的氣味。此外，只要進入電子信箱，輕鬆敲打鍵盤，就能夠在兩分鐘內，完成一封看似真情感人的信，再花半分鐘就能夠依藉聯絡人清單，同時寄給數個e-mail address。三十天後，電子信箱的寄件匣還會自動欣除，清潔溜溜，一切彷彿從來沒有發生過。

在這個標榜個人特色的年代，其實我們都有著同樣由新細明體組成的面孔，也都會如舞台上偶像歌手般，流星似地消逝。就如你和浪子湯馬士，女人所表徵的，只是一具又一具氣味不同的肉體。在交換體液後，記憶體會自動淘洗篩選，最後只剩下資料夾中，那一張評定等第的清單。在眾多名字中，從來沒有特殊性可言；因此，背叛也變成從一個名字換到另一個名字，如此輕飄失重的行為罷了。

輕輕地，陌生女子推開座椅，起身說：「也許我們不能愛的原

因，就是我們急切地希望被人愛。」

然後，如同我們最初相遇，她又將那本厚厚的《安娜·卡列尼娜》夾在腋下，提起背包離開，黑髮在空中拋灑出輕盈的弧度，沒入夜色之中。

然而，我仍舊不明白，一個陌生女子為什麼會闖進我孤獨的等待中，和我擁有相同的遭遇和夢境？這世界難道真是一個沒有邊界的網路！人與人之間的遭遇，就是這般荒謬，而虛實也從來難以辨別嗎？

這時候，落地窗外的招牌亮起了燈，成為小巷內唯一閃爍的星光，我喝完冰冷的焦糖拿鐵，頓時明白，如果生活中有著太多的期待，期待永恆、忠誠，期待自己成為別人心目中的獨一無二，那麼一切就都只能交給別人去評定等第了。我們也將會忽視每個美好的當下；然後，一切期待落空，而化作生命中難以承受之重。我低頭闔上原本要記錄你種種背叛而此時卻仍舊空白的MUJI筆記本，發現自己一點兒也不想將它填滿。

望著你不曾走進的巷口，我做了一場畢竟成空的等待，卻奇異地感到前所未有的輕盈。回家後，我將決定拿出卸妝水，恢復自己最真實的面孔，並且開始想念起陌生女子清澈而無任何防備的眼神，以及她對我說過的每一句話。至於她的名字，會是特麗莎或者是薩賓娜，或者她是否真的存在過，都已經不再重要了。這世界果真是一個沒有邊界的網路！人與人之間的遭遇，原本就是這般荒謬。

等待是一條滾滾長河，沒有終點。然而，我已經不再期待蒸騰水氣消散後，會是你逐漸清晰的臉孔。