

愛、傳、城

Love Is All Around

得獎作品集 全港中英文徵文比賽 第二屆

The 2nd Hong Kong
Chinese & English
Essay-Writing Competition

A COLLECTION OF
AWARD-WINNING WORKS



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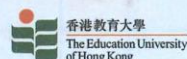
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Open Section (English Division) Champion

Name: Lee Ho Cheung

Cocoon

I

This is all you have left.
A wooden chair, a pair of aluminum needles,
several yarn balls, a pair of scissors, an old
knitted dress covering your gaunt shape, a huge
knot of hair that keeps your scalp warm
against the sarcastic words blowing
from the abyss below.
A final check of your past,
you put down the chair and
rub your rough palms together for
the metallic sticks sitting on your laps.
They cling and clang – the song
that has enriched your long walk
as a soundtrack to a silent film.
You have made up your mind before arrival.
You will knit the finest and longest scarf.
Long enough to wrap yourself into
a cocoon.
You believe in metamorphosis.

It will be a success this time, you tell yourself,
pulling a string of yarn
into the circular motions of the needles
to sing a familiar rhythmic tune
underneath the mysterious voice of the harp.

Listen,
the sun is obscured
as the clock starts.

II

A scarlet snake of scarf lies across
the barren ground. Lifeless.
Yet it grows in length as the yarn balls
vanish one after another. These hairy
eggs seem to jointly hatch to
deliver a single presence.
You stop your batons for the first time
and stroke its coarse scales.
It rattles.
It hisses.
You wish that it would coil around you.

Lifeless still. You push it with a foot.
The newborn crawls over to the edge
and succumbs to the requests of the mist
two thousand feet below.

III

It comes alive.
The very piece of fabric that you have been
weaving so hard becomes deviant like a juvenile.
It moves away from its creator and there's little
that you can do about it. It goes over the cliff
and sinks lower
and lower.
This tug of war is eventless
(if it's necessary at all),
and you are pulled off your chair.
Your first fall.

The clock doesn't stop.
You approach the edge
to see what you cannot do.

The clock doesn't stop.
You have decided to continue
to bleed.

IV

You are pulled over the cliff this morning.
Your second fall.
Is it not expected? You hang from the edge
upside-down with the needles in hands
attached to the work that you have been
crafting. Letting go has never been part of you –
a part of you keeps on telling you
to continue at all cost;
another part of you doesn't exist.

You speed up,
your hands are powered by motors
and ambition and obsession
and a vision.
And then, there is the part against all odds –
you manage to climb back up to the surface,
head-down, using feet only.
It's the Time Stone at work,
rewinding the motion of
how you got dragged down.
Miraculous things happen
for the determined minds. Yes.

You don't see it every day.
You don't even see it as a miracle.
There leaves only one thing in your heart –
the beat.

V

Death appears in the form
of the piercing gust.
The anaconda takes flight
and outlines the shape of Hades.
You look up
but not impressed.
Neither does he seem to acknowledge
your effort or skills though you are
expecting words of appreciation,
or at least,
a low-pitched "Well done".
After all, you have cheated him.

The last yarn ball is weaved into
the veins of the floating god.
You fail to find any more materials
for your craft, nor does the flying entity
find any words to wake you.

The wind ceases.
The crimson work drops
to start another fight.

VI

The very silk you produce for
your protective casing goes on to
escape from you. Or, is there somebody
wanting to take it so badly that they
lure it down the bottomless space?

Transformation is a luxury, especially
when you cannot even manipulate the
material that builds your chrysalis.

Caterpillars are designed to transform.
Within the amorphous mess in their
pupa stage, several imaginal discs are
left undigested to grow into the
distinctive body parts of a butterfly.

You believe that you are engineered
as well with these groups of cells inside you
to be unlocked when the time comes.

You are ready to melt yourself with
enzymes you release. All you need is
the escaping skin that fails you,
like you are solving a
problem with a solution which
grows into a problem itself.

I've got this.
I've got this.
You start to dissolve anyway.

VII

Here is your logic:
You will build the cocoon at all cost,
even at the expense of the components
you save for your future limbs and organs.

It is like killing yourself to show
how much you miss your partner;
it is like breaking the laws
to show that you are civilized;
it is like weaving your hair into
the scarf which is to keep your body warm,
to keep yourself together.

People don't care about possessions
when their time is about to end. They say.
Not quite the case in real life.
They do care. You do.

You packed your gear for the cliff
after the funeral while you still had control.

VIII

Your third fall doesn't make you sacred
(Jesus's three falls while carrying the
cross were not at all biblically scripted);
your mouth's carrying a cross doesn't either;
your fighting a snake doesn't either.
Your pilgrimage leads only to
your being conjoint with that which
has turned against you.

You crawl back for the tool you save
for your rebirth after the process.
The scissors sit still to watch you in pain.

You take the cross apart and
move forward by sticking the needles
into the ground and pulling against
the force from the other end.

You do know why you need the scissors.
It is obvious.
You will grab them and fall with
the scarf so that the cocoon can
be formed at the bottom of the abyss.
And then, you will break the case open
to see the sky which is no longer
measured by its colour or capacity.

An inch away, a needle snaps and
you follow your elongated body
into the black hole.

You still make no sound –
that's the most sacred part.

IX

Many years later, it was reported that
she climbed to the cliff after her cat
died the night before. She equipped herself
and arrived when the sun barely rose.
You told her that a long red scarf
freshly knitted could fish the dead
up from the abyss.

But you know the true story.
It was you who snapped the yarn
and dropped the strangled cat down the hill
and you convinced yourself that it was
all that you could do.

I

This is all you have left.
A wooden chair, a pair of scissors,
a new mirage of yourself having
returned from the edge
after losing a debate.
You have kept your willpower throughout
in spite of the changed destiny.
The scissors you save are the key
to the treasure box that no longer exists.
They ching and chang – the song
accompanies your final chapter
as the music someone chooses
for your funeral – you are not invited
and thus not consulted.
You have made up your mind before arrival
and now you have altered that mind.
You start to question about that finest and longest scarf
which has promised to change you.
Cocoons come in all shapes and textures.
What you believe in is metamorphosis,
not the process of it.
The metallic tool sings and urges
the clock to restart.

Again,
your desire for a new shell
camouflages the existing one.