

## Portrait of a Lonely Painter

On the wall of a museum showroom in Amsterdam hangs a painting portraying a peasant family in a murky dining room eating potatoes by lamplight. The sombre mood of the work, created by dark earthly tones, honestly shows the gloomy, depressive world of the peasants. This masterpiece, known as “The Potato Eaters”, was the first attempt of a budding artist who was eager to demonstrate his talent to the world. Despite the apparent “mistakes” in the painting — the disproportionately large torsos and the rigid poses of the figures — the artist’s unconventional perception of beauty took him beyond a great artist and made him a legend. This is Vincent van Gogh.



The gusty wind rustling olive branches, implied by the foaming patterns, is viscerally portrayed. The dark brown earth, the yellow and lilac fields and grey-blue sky are a splendid show of colours.

The gifted artist was, however, a complete failure in everything the secular world values. Calling himself a nonentity and a disagreeable man, he was not able to earn his own living. Nor was he able to start a family or even keep his friends. Yet, he wanted to let people know what was inside his heart through painting. His art was an attempt to regulate a world with which he was unable to come to terms. The painting of his yellow chair standing vacant on a red-tiled floor is a symbol of despair and loneliness.

Van Gogh was a late bloomer. It was only at the age of 27 that he decided to take up painting as his career. Desperate to make up for the lost time, he went to art schools and took long hours of practical training with monkish devotion and manic industry. Like many other artists, van Gogh, convinced of his own genius, lived in the absolute assurance that he would one day revolutionise the art world.

Fate handed van Gogh both talent and a disturbed mind. Suffering from psychotic episodes, he was considered a lunatic rather than a genius by people of his day. Two days before Christmas in 1888, plagued by hallucinations, he cut off one of his ears with a razor blade. After his discharge from hospital, he painted the famous “Self-Portrait with Bandaged Ear”, in which the gay colour of the easel in the back offers a stark contrast to the whiteness of the wide bandage on his face.

In 1887, van Gogh, together with other aspiring painters, had his first exhibition in *Du Chalet*, a cheap Parisian restaurant artists frequented. However, nothing was sold. There is a rumour going around that van Gogh sold only one painting during his lifetime. Refusing to come to terms with the harsh reality of the world, he said, “I can’t change the fact that my paintings don’t sell. But the time will come when people will recognise that they are worth more than the value of the paints used in the picture.” The time did come, but, sadly, only after his death.

Van Gogh’s disturbed mind never quieted down. At the age of 36, he went on his own into an asylum near Arles where he painted day and night to near exhaustion so as to banish the fear of relapse. A strong sense of turmoil and restlessness runs through the surface of his paintings of this period. The flickering brush strokes become a true torrent and pour over the whole of the canvas: intricately entwined gigantic nebulae on a star-studded sky, the waving yellow of the ripe wheat fields, the green flaming tongues of the cypresses....



A century passed. Van Gogh’s works are still influencing how people view beauty. During his stay in Paris, the confident artist, inspired by the fresh subjects he encountered, began to experiment with avant-garde art. The earlier dark, mute tone of his palette gave way to a plethora of vibrant colours, as shown in the burst of bright yellow in the “Four Cut Sunflowers”, which captivates the mind and leaves one astounded at their simplistic beauty.

Fascinated by the beauty of southern France, van Gogh, full of hopes, left Paris and boarded the train for Arles in February 1888. One day, something caught his eye when he was strolling across the countryside. It was a ruined abbey on Montmajour, a small hill covered with holly, pines and olives. He climbed the hill. Under the greyish sky, he stood hunched against the strong wind, barely able to plant an easel, and started painting on the rattling canvas. He translated the sky, rocks and plains into a swarm of swirls, dots and dashes.

Gravely worried about the financial and family problems facing his brother Theo, on whom he fully depended, van Gogh was unable to shed the sorrow that had taken hold of him. On a summer night in 1890, he went into the fields and shot himself in the chest. Two days later, he died in the arms of Theo, marking the end of the short life of a lonely, misunderstood artist, whose soulful interpretation of the world mirrors his unrequited love for art.



# 對妙聯奇

一天，明代戲曲家湯顯祖從豐城學館回家，途中遇雨，便跑進一富翁家避雨。富翁請了一位老學究為七個兒孫授業。老學究見湯氏冒昧闖進，便問道：“君從何處來？要到何處去？”湯顯祖以打油詩答道：“細撒一陣雨，彳亍兩腳泥。臨川湯若士，豐城教書歸。”老塾師一聽便知湯氏飽讀詩書，望着堂上的七位學生，給才子出一上聯：“牡丹花開，七子滿堂皆春色。”話還未說完，湯顯祖即對道：“梧桐葉落，一根光棍打秋風。”老學究讚嘆不已，再出一題：“無意相逢，老朽喜識千里馬，真乃三生幸事。”虛懷若谷的湯顯祖應聲對道：“有緣邂逅，小子勝讀十年書，可謂百載良機。”富翁聽到他們的對話，對湯顯祖的博學高才十分欽佩，於是邀請他留宿共對妙聯，湯顯祖欣然答允。

對聯文字簡潔雋永，講求平仄諧調，讀來抑揚頓挫，琅琅上口，內容包羅萬象，引人入勝，可與唐詩媲美，是文苑中一朵奇葩。對聯園地裏，百花爭豔；工整生動的妙對多不勝數，背後的故事雖大多民間杜撰，但也極富傳奇色彩。

據說，乾隆與東閣大學士劉統勳到熱河遊玩，忽發雅興，出聯“熱河泉畔看熱河，始知熱河泉中出”，要劉學士對。劉氏看到旁邊的煙雨樓，靈機一動，指着樓閣對道：“煙雨樓頭觀煙雨，頓覺煙雨樓邊生。”君臣二人騎馬前行，經過沙灘，乾隆又出一聯：“馬足踏開岸上沙，風來復合。”劉統勳聽後，拍手稱妙，想了片刻便說：“櫓梢撥破江心月，水定還圓。”乾隆感到疲累，於是到附近的寺廟稍事休息，閉目養神之際，忽聞悠揚誦經聲，順口吟出：“僧呼佛祖，唯願千

秋”，學士馬上回答：“人信神仙，誰能百歲？”乾隆大讚劉氏文才了得，傳旨回宮賞賜美酒。



清末維新派領袖梁啟超天資聰穎，有“神童”美譽。十歲時隨父親赴宴，看見園中杏花盛開，於是偷摘一枝藏入袖中，卻給父親和許多賓客看見。梁父礙於賓客滿堂，不便訓斥，遂出一聯以為警示：“袖裏籠花，小子暗藏春色”，並說如對不出不能入席，只能為長輩斟酒倒茶。梁啟超不假思索，隨口對出“堂前懸鏡，大人明察秋毫。”在場賓客無不拍手稱好。

一九三二年，清華大學入學試的國文試卷有一道對聯題，上聯為“孫行者”。差不多所有考生都給這道題難倒，僅少數人對得上，當中一個答案“胡適之”，更令出題者嘆服。為何“胡適之”與“孫行者”能對上？因為上下句都是名字，而“胡孫”（即“狢猻”）指猿猴，“行”與“適”都是動詞，是前行的意思，“者”和“之”則是虛詞，加上考生幽了胡適之先生一默，這個妙對在文壇上成為一時佳話。

詩聖杜甫晚年寓居奉節縣沙頭鎮，開了一間“百草堂”中藥店，藉以為生。鎮上有一郎中名劉玉霍，醫術高超，常解囊濟貧，贈醫施藥。杜甫聞之，非常敬佩，在某年春節寫了一副對聯相贈。上聯為“阿斗過橋到蜀地”，下聯是“昭君出塞去異鄉”，橫批為“立起沉痾”。精通詩書的劉氏看到對聯和橫額高興萬分，連聲說：“絕對！絕對！”為何郎中如此欣賞這副對聯？原來對聯藏了多味中藥的名稱和漢代一位大將的姓名，又巧妙地稱讚了老中醫。你能解破這副聯謎嗎？（答案見頁底）

不求好句，只求好意。

歐陽修《吊僧詩》



炎炎夏日，到處可以聽到蟬鳴，忽高忽低，忽長忽短，嘶嘶地響個不停。到了清秋時節，白露初降，金風送爽，蟬聲變得斷斷續續，似有還無。盛夏蟬聲聒噪，深秋蟬聲低沉，不過是自然現象，但聽在詩人耳裏卻別有一番滋味在心頭。

唐代詩人駱賓王在幽暗的囚室裏低着頭，不斷嘆息，想到遭誣陷入獄，怨憤難平。囚室外有幾株古槐



樹，夕陽斜照低垂枝葉，樹上的蟬不斷鳴叫。白髮蒼蒼的詩人聽到，頓生感觸，寫下《在獄詠蟬》。“西陸蟬聲唱，南冠客思深。不堪玄鬢影，來對白頭吟。露重飛難進，風多響易沉。”駱氏將自己比擬為秋蟬，雖雙翼輕盈，卻

難振翅高飛；就算為人光明磊落，像蟬居高樹啜飲清露，可惜濁世昏昏，“無人信高潔，誰為表予心”，道盡詩人心中鬱結。

在詩人筆下，世間事物，無論是蟬鳴，還是深山寺廟皆可成詩。千多年前一個秋夜，詩人張繼乘客船來到寒山寺。船泊岸時，皓月早已西沉，天色一片灰蒙蒙。夜深露重，樹上烏鴉發出幾聲鳴叫。在江邊楓樹下，停泊着幾艘漁船，船上點點燈火在漆黑中閃動。詩人躺在客船上，縷縷鄉愁縈繞心頭，難以入眠。“月落烏啼霜滿天，江楓漁火對愁眠”，旅人孤單寂寥的心情躍然紙上。

今天來到姑蘇城外，在楓橋古鎮的石板路上穿行，掩映在青松古柏中的黛瓦黃牆、六角形的重簷亭閣映入眼簾，不遠處傳來幾陣鐘聲，聲音悠揚飄渺。韶光荏苒，掛在寒山寺的古鐘已非張繼筆下的那一座，江邊碼頭泊滿客船的情境也不復再，但佇立寺前，彷彿穿越時光隧道，看到張氏站在客船上，默默吟誦着“姑蘇城外寒山寺，夜半鐘聲到客船。”

走進多姿多彩的古詩世界，常常驚嘆詩人對生活細節的深刻描寫。千古傳誦的佳作，今天細讀，仍舊動人心弦。離別惹人愁，思念催人瘦。王勃筆下多情的採蓮女憶念遠赴沙場的丈夫，飽受相思之苦。明月當空，面如芙蓉的女子輕輕地搖着櫓，在河塘上採蓮，

看到一片碧葉紅花，昔日“牽花憐共蒂，折藕愛連絲”的甜蜜情境浮現腦海，可惜愛郎杳無音訊，生死未卜，想到朱顏日漸老去，不禁抱怨道：“塞外征夫猶未還，江南採蓮今已暮。”詩人路過江邊，目睹一羣同病相憐的採蓮女互相慰問，心中暗道：“共問寒江千里外，征客關山路幾重？”盼望愛侶早日歸來的人唸到此處倍感淒酸。



人生聚散本是平常事，但要豁達面對談何容易。生活不如意，找不到出路時，走進陶淵明的桃花源，細味農事野趣，可讓人暫時拋開煩憂，心靈重拾恬靜。《歸園田居》裏的山村風光如畫，“榆柳蔭後簷，桃李羅堂前。”村民生活淳樸，“晨興理荒穢，帶月荷鋤歸”，見面時談的都是田裏的桑麻長得有多高、菜苗有多粗壯等莊稼事。城市人“久在樊籠裏”，何不偶爾仿效五柳先生回歸田園，閑來“採菊東籬下”，看看“依依墟里煙”，聽聽“雞鳴桑樹顛”？

閱讀古詩就好像打開百寶箱，眼前盡是絢麗奪目的珍品。細膩雋永的詩句深刻表達詩人的思想情感、人生履痕，讀到共鳴處，心裏會發出回響。快樂時讀詩，寂寞時更要讀詩。好詩不厭百回讀，多讀一回，便會有多一點的得着和領會。

# 大千傳奇

一下清脆的槌聲掀起二零一一年香港蘇富比春季拍賣會的高潮：水墨泰斗張大千的《嘉耦圖》以接近二億港元的天價成交，哄動中外。《嘉耦圖》寫的是兩株荷花，花下一對鴛鴦，寓意佳偶天成。荷花色彩鮮豔，在墨葉烘襯之下，益顯出塵脫俗，挺秀嬌美，難怪成為海內外收藏家競相爭奪的珍品。

張大千開創潑彩畫法，為國畫創作另覓新途，作品在中國書畫市場一直備受熱捧。張大千生前揚名國際，身後盛名不減，除了非凡的藝術造詣、胸襟和視野，一生濃得化不開的傳奇色彩也是其魅力所在。

張大千本名正權，四川內江人。據說張母分娩前一晚，夢見一白鬚老翁送上銅盤，盤上有一頭小黑猿，並叮囑她黑猿不喜月亮，不沾葷腥，不受拘束，務必小心照料。事有湊巧，張大千出生後，家人每次抱他出門，讓他看天上明月，小娃兒都會號啕大哭，而且一碰葷腥便嘔吐大作，因此認定他是黑猿轉世。

夢兆之說古已有之，多屬茶餘飯後的談資，但也有人認為並非盡是荒誕之話。張大千屬猴，是有名的猿癡，曾一度豢養十多頭猿猴，甚至帶着牠們乘坐飛機。他喜歡以猿入畫，作品更常以恩師曾熙所取別名“張媛”（“媛”是“猿”的古字）落款，可謂“猿”份匪淺。

說起來，“大千”這個名號同樣有段因緣。張大千在日本學藝時，未婚妻不幸早逝。兩人感情十分要好，頓失摯愛，心中起了終生不娶的念頭。回國後，他決心皈依，到松江禪定寺拜逸琳方丈門下，獲賜法號“大千”。

大千後來聽說寧波觀宗寺的諦閑法師佛法精妙，高山仰止，便登門問道。二人談經論佛，一見如故，但卻為燒戒疤一事爭論起來。年少輕狂的張大千指燒戒無關佛理，只是梁武帝大赦死囚後，為免他們故態

復萌而想出來的點子。法師說燒戒猶如為野馬籠頭，馴服了才能變成良駒。張大千見說服不了法師，剃度大典又近在眼前，便從寺院逃了出來。出寺後成了遊方和尚，輾轉下經朋友介紹到上海的寺廟掛單，沒想到友人向老家報信，最後在火車站被二哥張善孖押回四川完婚。張大千就這樣當了一百天的和尚。

藝術家不乏出家人，但當過土匪的，恐怕唯大千先生一人。張大千少時在重慶讀書，有一年暑假回鄉，路上遭土匪綁走，命他寫信回家要贖金。信寫好後，土匪頭子發覺這少年筆底功夫不錯，硬要他留下來當師爺，負責管帳、寫告示和綁票勒索信。十來歲的少年哪有反抗餘地，便糊裡糊塗當起土匪來。

張大千一次隨土匪到一大戶人家打劫，同伴見他在一旁發呆，看別人搶掠卻不動手，便提醒他空手而回是匪幫大忌。他只對書有興趣，便隨手撿了本《詩學涵英》，但“書”與“輸”同音，結果再次被罵，他只好胡亂扯下牆上幾幅字畫。三個月後，土匪被官兵剿了，張大千的強盜生涯也畫上句號。沒想到那本《詩學涵英》竟成為張大千學詩的啓蒙書。

張大千畢生致力創作，山水巨構《廬山圖》是他最後的作品。這位遊遍大江南北，曾旅居印度、巴西、北美、香港，最後定居台灣的大宗師，原來從未一睹廬山真貌。雖已屆八十五歲高齡，但仍每天挽起鬚子，捲起袖子，伏在巨型畫案上，任潑出的墨彩恣意牽引，神遊詩文方志中的廬山，讓在心中經過千錘百鍊的峻巒飛瀑、瓊樹明湖活現毫端。辭世時，畫作仍未完成，但《廬山圖》運色入妙，氣勢磅礴，傑作地位無可動搖。張大千一生奇遇不絕，畫作數以萬計，難怪徐悲鴻以“五百年來一大千”形容這位畫壇巨擘。



三分春色描來易，一段傷心畫出難。

湯顯祖《牡丹亭·寫真》

# Night Thoughts

On a dark night, English Romantic poet William Wordsworth lay awake in his bed, praying for a moment of blessed unconsciousness. For three nights in a row, he had been wrestling with insomnia. Dragged into a torrent of exasperation and exhaustion, he resorted to the worn-out remedy of sheep counting.

As portrayed in his sonnet "To Sleep", a flock of sheep "leisurely" pass by Wordsworth, and "one after one," he counts them. Tormented by his wakefulness, he turns his thoughts to "the sound of rain" and the murmuring hum of bees. He conjures up an idyllic world with "rivers, winds and seas", and imagines seeing "smooth fields, white sheets of water, and pure sky". However, "I have thought of all by turns, and still I lie/Sleepless!" admits the poet.

Wordsworth compares sleep to a recalcitrant beauty. No matter how hard he tries to win her heart, she continues to deny him the privilege of sinking into deep oblivion. With dread, he anticipates the hearing of the "first cuckoo's melancholy cry", a symbol of another failed night. Sleep is the "blessed barrier between day and day", and a "mother of fresh thoughts and joyous health". Without sleep, our mind dries up, our well-being suffers and joy disappears. In desperate need for a moment of peace, the poet begs, "So do not let me wear to-night away". His lament strikes a chord with people who have gone through countless sleepless nights.

Like Wordsworth, the persona of Emily Brontë's poem "Spellbound" is trapped by the night, though not by sleep but by something beyond her control: "The night is darkening round me". The "wild winds" are blowing "coldly", the "giant trees are bending" and "their bare boughs weighed with snow". The storm is not simply continuing but is "fast descending". Yet she "cannot, cannot go" because she is under a "tyrant spell".

What keeps her there? The question has intrigued poem lovers for over a century. It has been suggested that the woman is terrified at the prospect of leaving her child to die in the mountains on a stormy winter night. But she cannot bring herself to do that. Forcefully written with bleak imagery and alliteration, this



short poem describes a struggle between a woman and the storm that is trying to force her to retreat. At the end the persona takes control of herself and declares "nothing drear can move me", and "I will not, cannot go."

Some say the night belongs to the dead. Thomas Hardy's poem "Channel Firing", written four months before the outbreak of the First World War, is an outcry against humans' perpetual quests for power and vengeance, narrated by a dead man buried in a graveyard near a church. Awakened by the sounds of guns in a military exercise, the dead man says with fear, "That night your great guns, unawares,/ Shook all our coffins as we lay". The mouse is so scared that it drops the "altar-crumbs" and the worms crawl back into the mounds. The roaring gunfire makes the dead think of the coming of the Judgement Day.

God assures the dead man that it is not the Judgement Day, and that the noises are from "gunnery practice out at sea". The world is just like it used to be. The bloodthirsty nature of men has never changed and all nations are "striving strong to make/Red war yet redder." God jests that it is a "blessed thing" that the Judgement Day has not come yet. If not, most of the living would have to sweep the floor of Hell for their threats of war.



One of the dead wonders why men cannot curb their endless desire for war and why the world is as confusing as when they were alive. A priest, another dead man in the graveyard, replies in a depressing tone, "I wish I had stuck to pipes and beer", implying that men never learn, and all his efforts to preach are in vain.

More guns are fired, disturbing the night, and men are "roaring their readiness to avenge". As belligerent as ever, humans indulge in their fantasies of war which go back to distant history, back to the days when Stourton Tower was built to resist the invasion of the Danes, back to the age of King Arthur and his knights, and back to the time when the mysterious Stonehenge was erected.

We think we are all acquainted with the night. But with their dazzling ability to communicate human solitude, frailty and visionary hope, poets paint a different picture of the nocturnal hours.



Painting is poetry that is seen rather than felt, and poetry is painting that is felt rather than seen.

Leonardo da Vinci

# UNIVERSITY BEHIND BARS

A group of inmates in grey prison clothes surrounded a stout man with a winged moustache inside a brightly-lit classroom, listening attentively to every word the man said. They were the students of an art class and the man was their tutor, Thomas.

“Look at this blank paper. What are you going to do with it, Jack?” asked Thomas, fixing his eyes on a young man who was a newcomer to the correction centre and the class.

Jack shook his head.

“You have choices,” said Thomas while opening a box of watercolour paints, “and there are so many to choose from.” He squeezed red, yellow and green paints into the wells of a palette, and started mixing water with them. Jack watched closely what Thomas did.

“We have the freedom to express,” continued Thomas, “and we have the freedom to paint what we want.”

Jack dipped his brush into the reddish liquid on his palette, and carefully painted inside the outline of a robot he had drawn with pencil. There was so much water in his brush that the liquid splashed across the surface of the sheet.

“You don’t want a robot that drips.” Thomas snatched the brush from Jack and dabbed it on a towel to soak up the excess liquid.

Sunlight shone through the bars on the window. Jack was so engrossed in his painting that he momentarily forgot his fear — a rare moment of calmness since he was taken to prison. When the lesson was over, he looked at his work, and his lips curved into a contented smile.

That night, Jack curled up in the top bunk inside his cell, scribbling in a pristine diary given by his father: *Day 12. I like my painting. It’s cool. The robot looks exactly like the one I have at home. I felt free in the class.*

“Did you enjoy the painting class?” A voice came from below.

“Yeah, very much.” Jack looked down and saw Thomas reading a letter from his son.

“Have you finished university?” asked Thomas.

“No, I only finished secondary school.”

“Drug?”

“No. I stole from a bank, you know, by hacking an A.T.M. I got caught on my first attempt,” replied Jack.

“Petty. I robbed banks and convenience stores, and battered an old guy to death as he tried to snatch his money back. I’ve got no chance of parole. But I was an art teacher, before taking heroin, so they let me teach here,” said Thomas. “My son is the same age as you. He’s going to be a lawyer after graduation this June. Young man, get a university degree here. If you learn, you don’t return.”

Jack found hope in Thomas’s words and joined the programme called “University Behind Bars”. Days passed, and Jack got used to what happened around him. One night, as usual, he wrote: *Have been here for a year now. Things are pretty much the same. Thanks to Thomas, I’m safe here. But I failed my English test today.*

*Have got to work harder. The chief warden ordered me to paint something pleasant on the wall of the reception area of the prison school, starting tomorrow. “No small feat,” Thomas said.*

Inspired by his first trip to the beach with his parents, Jack relived his happy memories by painting a boy building a sand castle under an orange sun. Sumptuously painted in rich reds, bright greens and succulent yellows, his first mural delighted both inmates and visitors who could feel the gentle ocean breeze and hear the rustle of swaying palms as they gazed at the wall. Jack finished more paintings and his art was all over the place: a poster portraying a white teddy bear with a red heart at the entrance of the prison, a mural showing a beautiful violet sky over a blue lagoon inside the dining hall, a water-colour sketch hanging near the sports ground depicting a tall man throwing down a powerful slam dunk....

Guided by Thomas, Jack collaborated with some fellow prisoners in producing a comic book called *A Different Life* for raising drug awareness. More than a thousand copies were distributed. Jack continued to chalk up more achievements. On his 999th day in prison, he wrote: *A great day. Told by the chief warden I would be given parole after I get my degree. I got a ‘B’ in English Language. One more. I won the National Prison Postcard Design Competition. It’s a drawing of an angel walking alongside a man in chains and shackles.*

A few months later, the prison door was thrown open, and Jack, in a blue suit, walked out into the sunshine. His father, standing in the shade of a blooming cherry-blossom tree, waved to him. Jack had wanted to say “Hi, Dad”, but the words seemed to clog in his throat. Before getting into the car, he halted and looked back at the correction centre. Suddenly, a piece of drawing paper fell from the brown envelope he was holding, and fluttered to the ground. Jack picked it up, and tears welled in his eyes. It was a painting of a colourful palette, and written on the back were the words: *You have choices. Don’t return.*



Poetry is when an emotion has found its thought and the thought has found words.

Robert Frost



## 哭筆

房屋署  
宣傳經理薛偉華

坐在書桌前的我，望着那久違的朋友，發默了半天，還是寫不出一字半句來。這闊別多年不見的朋友，就是學生時代常用的一枝墨水筆。望着它那細緻纖巧的外形，又望着那潔白的原稿紙，想了良久。我該寫什麼好呢？在坐上軟綿綿的座椅前，心中還是躊躇滿志，要為封筆多年的我來一個從新開始。更特意從抽屜中拿出心中視為瑰寶的墨水筆，端端正正的放在一疊白紙旁，但苦思一段時間，最終還是要擲筆三嘆。

記得古詞有云：“欲寫彩箋書別怨，淚痕早已先書滿。”多麼羨慕作者，寥寥數語，便能將相思之苦交代清楚，感情洋溢得這般厲害。原來感情這回事，壓根兒是文章的靈魂。我可以抹乾淨那久封的筆，拿出上好的紙，但抹不淨是那塵封的心、結了繭的感情。就像一個曾經在戰場上出生入死的驍將，當他再次提槍上馬的時候，他可以換上一套最堅固的鎧甲，拿着最鋒利的刀戟，但在沙場上，將軍最需要的其實是那份殺敵的勇氣。三國時代曹丕曾說：“文以氣為主，氣之清濁有體，不可力強而致……雖在父兄，不能以移子弟。”我謂寫作才能不但不能傳之於人，即使作者自己，那因年深月久而消磨的志氣，也足以削弱他下筆的感情，沒有澎湃的感情，怎能寫出動人心脾的文章？



十九歲時仿效別人寫小說，竟意外地拿了香港市政局文學獎。猶記當年，在不知多少個深夜，當家人都鑽進暖暖的被窩尋夢，我卻獨自沉醉在文字的美夢中。在寒風颯颯的露台，一個家中僅餘可以啃書的地方，亮起案上小燈，心中的感情思緒，隨着那枝心愛的墨水筆，一點一滴的流出。

有次寫至星光燦然的凌晨三點，涼風拂來，舉頭一望夜空，腦中忽來一句：“清輝常伴添我衣”。是的，記不起在多少個晚上，在陋室中低頭揮筆疾寫，積壓在心頭的說話，如活水江河般迸發出來。寫完第一篇小說，便開始第二篇、第三篇，都僥倖拿獎。獎項只是一種點綴，當年我寫小說，只是因為內心要宣泄的感情太多，這枝筆便成了我最好的幫忙。

寫完小說後，便開始練習古詩詞。“玉枝橫抱春疊散，花落軟泥煙雨間”、“露深重滴欄杆，月眸輕浮浮柳塘”、“日嚼寒菊醉花蔭，晚意輕來帶月魂”、“禾曠睡，小橋堆，殘陽半垂，星斗獨徘徊”等等都是自鳴得意的傑作，也不理是否格律諧協，當時真的以為自己有“興酣落筆搖五岳，詩成笑傲凌滄洲”之色；這種敝帚自珍的心理，如今回想起來，我是多麼懷念。

但這又怎樣？十數年後，當自己再面對這枝筆，再想重拾那段逝去的歲月，竟隻字寫不出來。內心枯竭了？還是那深情與至誠給埋沒了？現代都市人空有包裝漂亮的文具紙張，但欠缺的還是心裏那份真摯的感情。

是嗎，我真的麻木了嗎？真的不能寫出好文章來？心中硬是不服氣，便拿起那枝筆，往墨水瓶蘸了些墨水。唏，為什麼寫不出字來？也許筆嘴生鏽了，給堵塞了。不怕，搖一搖，讓筆嘴濕潤一些，準能寫出字來。啊，不好了，墨水都一滴一滴潑灑在原稿紙上，像淚水般化開了。

原來我拿着的是一枝哭筆，意興更為索然。苦笑之餘使我想起詩聖杜甫兩句話：“彩筆昔曾干氣象，白頭吟望苦低垂。”



“Painting is silent poetry, and poetry is painting that speaks.” Filled with vivid metaphors and wonderful rhymes, poems delight the ear and evoke emotions in the reader. Paintings, on the other hand, captivate the eye and reflect life with colours and images. Attempt the following questions to see how much you know about these two art forms:

- “April is the cruellest month, breeding/ Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing/ Memory and desire, stirring/ Dull roots with spring rain.” Who wrote these lines?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- What school of art did Monet and his associates establish?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- What is Haiku?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Who painted “Girl with a Pearl Earring”?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Complete these lines: “The Northern Lights have seen queer sights,/ But the queerest they ever did see/ Was that night on the marge of Lake Lebarge/ I \_\_\_\_\_.”
- This English Romantic painter was famous for his landscapes. He painted “Salisbury Cathedral from the Bishop’s Grounds” in 1825. Who is he?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Raphael, the “master of masters”, created from 1508 to 1511 a fresco featuring the school of an illustrious ancient city. Which city is that?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- The title of William Ernest Henley’s poem “Invictus” is a Latin word. What does it mean?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Y. B. Yeats’s tombstone contains the concluding lines of one of his poems. What are those lines?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- “She sits quietly, watching people through eyes that have a twinkle of merriment. Her hands rest on her lap. She is famous for her beguiling grin and her missing eyebrows.” This is the description of a famous painting. What is its name?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please send your entry to the Editorial Board of *Word Power*, Official Languages Division, Civil Service Bureau, Room 2310, High Block, Queensway Government Offices, 66 Queensway, Hong Kong before 15 August 2015. Watch out for our coming issue to see if you get all the answers right, and better still, if you are one of the lucky five to win a prize. The Editorial Board will have the final say on the answers.

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- 李白；廬山
- 騰格里沙漠
- 草木搖落露為霜
- 威尼斯
- 揚州
- 漾水河
- 王維
- 濯錦江
- 小龍團（茶餅）；惠山
- 《邊城》

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Issue No. 61 (September 2015) : Games We Play

二零一五年九月第六十一期主題：遊戲

Issue No. 62 (December 2015) : Music and Movie

二零一五年十二月第六十二期主題：音樂與電影

Contributions from colleagues are welcome. Please refer to Issue No. 42 for details.

歡迎同事投稿，細則請參閱第四十二期。

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