



The Ventriloquists 01. Description as Storytelling...ask the objects, by Jake Wong 死物不死：描述也是敘述（黃汛一）

*"The Ventriloquists...Thinking Narratively" (4-19 July 2020, 2-8pm except Mondays), an exhibition of 63 works in a constellation, begins with the on-line version of Jake Wong Sun-yat's responses to an assignment on generative literature. | **Generative Art -> Creative writing -> A story "generated" by surroundings -> "the window, the door, the cobble and the knife" | To Jake, what he offers is a framework — an initial state of a writing game that is endless with infinite iterations as long as we keep writing. Welcome to join. 《腹語系。微敘思考》啟動的第一個作品是創作性的文字。作者黃汛一的思路如下：衍生性藝術 -> 創作性文字 -> 一個因環境而衍生的故事 -> 「窗。門。卵石。刀。」 | 黃汛一說與其說這是完整的作品，不如把它看成一個寫作方法的種子示範，為誘更多的迭代，寫之不盡。***

***The Ventriloquists series (newsletter of the exhibition, daily updates)

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An Introduction: The time taken to think of "what" to do is much longer than the "how" and the "doing" combined, and one of the biggest challenges is "what" is a piece of generative literature. After coming up with several different ideas of creative and experimental writing, I figured that they are all more of interactive literature than generative. More time was taken until I realize that "the generative" doesn't only mean computing or using coding to write the algorithm your story but, inclusively, to create a "system" or a set of rules that can generate infinite writing pieces in the future, with or without deploying technology. And so I created a set of rules, a new "format" to create and tell stories, by hiding the main storyline and the main

character's perspective, but, instead, telling broken pieces of an event from the perspectives of the inanimate objects around it. The writing I am about to present is nothing but one insignificant branch from the trunk, what's important is the "seed" that germinates, that is, the framework I set up.

The Window

Pierced through by dozens of strips of light, time has finally come of the day where light retreats slowly from the room and climbs through the window to get back to the sky. Looking down to the streets, seeing people doing what they do, what they did yesterday, the day before, and the day further before, sometimes the window just can't help wondering what is the meaning behind all this. Going from the west side of the street to the east in the morning, then come back from the east side to the west, five or six days a week. Maybe this feeling is mutual. It is the time of the day when the window can soon enjoy some time for itself, with curtains down and nobody around. Nothing's particularly special today, but just one small thing is bothering the window. This time of the day, its lonely owner always stands aside from the window, stares at the crowded cobbled road and people setting off to head home. Yet today the window hasn't seen its owner anywhere near it. "Where might he be?" The window wonders, as it is nearly impossible for its owner to have any other company, but soon the window is over it as something else outside distracted it.

The Door

"It's about time it's about time..." Soon comes the favorite moment of the day for the door. As the guardian of the house, being approached isn't always a thing to be excited about, yet at this time of the day, there is nearly nothing to be worried about.

Serving the house for approximately 8 years now, the door knows clearly what entrance from each timeslot represents... All the patterns have been thoroughly studied and understood.

As the sun starts hiding behind mountains and hills, it's time its owner came home with a smile on his face and a warm hug for his wife and kids. Time passed by but the door still hasn't heard the squeak that the wheels make on the cobbled road. "Is he not driving? But I heard him driving to work this morning." The door is confused. Well, maybe the door is going to be disappointed as today is not one of those nights that the owner arrives home early. "A party?" Possibly. It must be a long night for the door and the family.

The Cobble

Crack... Crack... Unbothered by the evening crowd, the cobble is slumbering with the feather touch of the summer breeze. With years and years of experience, the cobble is pretty much at the point whereby not many stimuli can surprise it anymore.

Being stepped on all these years, the pattern, weight, frequency, pace of steps is telling the cobble everything it needs to know. Whether he or she is in a rush, excited, annoyed, worried, relieved, or joyful, hints and signs will be leaked out in their footsteps. Disarray signals all over the cobble's body show that it is rush hour again, people heading back to their shelter after a long day. Frustrated, exhausted, relieved, all kinds of emotion permeate through the cobble as vibrations. Slightly disturbed, the cobble decides to sober up for a while until the crowd disperses as it can't sleep peacefully right not anyway.

Crack... Crack... When there are fewer people on the street, one specific source of footsteps raised the cobble's awareness. "He has been around that corner for a long time, finally moving?" Not being able to understand what he is doing, the cobble focuses on the person. "Excited? Thrilled? Panic? A little bit of morbid elate. Hmm... Maybe a mix of all of the above." The cobble talks to itself while feeling a wave of a tremble that goes from the person's knees down to his toes. It's been a while since it has sensed such a complex feeling in this boring town. But why does he suddenly move? Soon the cobble found a possibility. With a continuous squeak created by four wheels, two pairs of feet land on the ground when the car stops. The two trails of footsteps appear to be nearer and nearer, the moment they collide, everything seems frozen. The bugs stopped

buzzing, the wind stopped blowing, something in the air made the cobble hold its breath as if it has to breathe at all. After a moment of silence, the vibration of something being dragged down the road carefully is sensed. Crack... Crack... Until it reached the grass where the cobble can't sense anymore.

The Knife

Summer, the season which the knife hates most. To be honest, nothing made out of steel will come even close to liking summer. The rain, the killing sunlight, the moist wind that wets everything around; these give nothing to the knife but rust and oxidation. Sleeping in this kind of weather is exceptionally hard, especially when they don't clean the knife well after using it. Having a hard time falling asleep, the knife completely passes out and it can finally take some rest. However, it is definitely not a pleasant experience as it wakes up in a completely unfamiliar place. Panic as ever, the knife still tries to figure out where it is. Almost completely dark with only a glimmer of lights that manages to slide through almost invisible holes, nearly no extra space at all, and very wavy. "Where am I?" Confused and panicking, the knife can't recall being anywhere similar to this. After taking a while to calm down, the knife can tell that despite being tossed around in the dark, it is conclusively moving towards a certain direction. Although the bumpy "ride" probably affects its senses, the knife feels the air around is even more humid than normal, and there is somehow a sequence of sound that sounds like something pumping near the knife. "Bub bub... Bub bub..." The sequence seems more and more rapid while the knife awaits whatever is going to happen to it.

Suddenly, something in front of the knife moved and a beam of light blinds the knife from finally seeing where it is. Being locked up in such a dark and relatively quiet space for some time, the sudden entrance of this much information overflows the knife, all it can hardly recognize is a strong light from two "eye-like" structure and the sound of an engine which it has heard but not seen before since it lives in the kitchen. Never even get to see anything else, the knife immediately got stuck into another dark place. "What's this place again...? The texture is more moist than what I cut before. What is this scent? I have never smelled this kind of blood." The knife has no idea what is going on. Feeling a pulling force at its handle, the knife thought it would finally be freed. But in a blink, it is struck back into darkness again, repeatedly. Until the knife is so dizzy that it completely loses its sense of direction, it is finally back to the dark place where all this began. The bump begins again, "When can I be back home..." The knife wonders, frustrated. Unfortunately, it's going to be a long way from home.

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Artist's Statement:

The story itself is not very complex but thinking of how to actually write an entertaining piece of story from angles provided by objects ... — that is a piece of puzzle from a bigger picture is not easy. Many times, I find myself writing something too straight forward and basic that the entire story is too boring. So, I decided to give the objects a "life", give them emotions that are semi-human but not so rich that readers may see them as creatures than objects. Through the text you can see that the objects have a certain degree of feeling but not to the point that they "care" a lot about what is happening around them. Not to the point where they can completely understand the situation and have sympathy for other characters in the story. Every object knows a certain perspective of what happened that evening but the readers can only trace the what actually happened by reading through all of the object's story.

This set of rules that I created can apply to basically most stories both fiction and non-fiction so instead of presenting just a creative writing, this is more of a writing method or new kind of presentation of a story that can generate even more literature. The story might only be a murder happened when the victim is heading home after work but a lot of things that normal story writing method shows is hidden. The intention, the planning, the relationship between the murder and the victim can be interpreted in multiple ways and each reader can have his or her own version of the story. This kind of story telling method leaves space for imagination and keeps readers in suspense.

(May 2020)

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