

She asked what I was going to do when I returned to China. She hoped I would not get involved in politics. Politics was such a cruel, wicked mess the world over, she said with great indignation.

After that we talked about her own writings. I said that her work was such pure art that it might be beyond the reach of ordinary people.

'That's just it,' she replied. 'Then of course, popularity is never the thing for us.'

I told her that I might translate some of her stories and that I would like to ask her permission first. She seemed delighted, and agreed readily to my proposal. But at the same time she doubted if they were worth the trouble.

She looked forward to my revisiting Europe at an early date, and invited me to visit her if I was in Switzerland. She told me how she loved the Swiss scenery, and how lovely Lake Geneva was. Listening to her I thought I could feel the waves softly lapping against our boat, and see the mountains across the lake.

Clear, placid Leman!

. . . thy soft murmuring

Sounds sweet as if a Sister's voice reproved.

That I with stern delights should e'er have been so moved.

Lord Byron<sup>10</sup>

I promised her I would surely visit her when I returned to Europe.

I was worried that she might be too tired. Before I finally left I expressed my regret at not having been able to see her earlier, and also my wish to see her again. She saw me off at the door and warmly shook me by the hand.

Four weeks ago I learned that Mansfield had died in France, at Fontainebleau. I meant to write this piece of mine long ago, while she was still alive, but somehow my innate laziness got the better of me, I kept putting it off. And now it will have to be my tribute to her memory. I have also added a poem, which can perhaps more adequately express my deep sense of grief.

*Mansfield: An Elegy*

I dreamed last night I was deep in a secluded valley,  
Listening to a cuckoo singing its heartblood among the lilies.  
I dreamed last night I was high on a mountain peak,  
Watching a glittering tear drop from the sky.

To the west of Rome is a quiet garden,  
Where a foreign poet lies buried in violets.  
A century later the wheels of Hades' chariot  
Turn roaring again in the green woods of Fontainebleau.

If the universe is a heartless machine,  
Why do ideals shine before us like a flaming torch?  
If it is a creation of truth, kindness, and beauty,  
Why does the rainbow not dwell forever on the horizon?