

Lin Bai / BETWEEN PAPAYA AND NAKEDNESS

Lychee, guava, star fruit, and chinaberry trees surrounded the house at Zhiqing Corner. Purslane, plantain, and moss clung to the foot of the wall. There were also wild yam, colourful flowers, and something resembling a sisal hemp, with hard, sharp thorns at the tip of its leaves.

As I am writing, a lush subtropical forest appears in the wake of my words. If you are familiar with the works of the French painter Henri Rousseau, you would see the plants I am writing about are just as sturdy, turgid, and menacing. A colorful leopard would sporadically appear amidst the foliage. Actually, this is all very misleading. Since I like Rousseau and look at his paintings often, I often mistakenly remember a likeness between the plants at Zhiqing Corner and those in Rousseau's paintings. Under the moonlight in a reverie, the sturdy bush of sisal hemp glimmered faintly. Anrong stood naked beside the plant. She was standing against the light, such that her entire body was obscured in shadows but her contour remained distinct. Her breasts were full and firm, lovely and sensual. Her hair hung below her waist (when did she grow her hair to such a length?) and tumbled down like a waterfall over one shoulder. Her body was in the shadows. I could not see her face clearly but her pupils were illuminated by a gentle yellow light, as though her body was lit by a bright lamp. Those flashing pupils were reminiscent of certain nocturnal creatures.

Of course you would say this sounds like a painting by Rousseau and not some description of Anrong. You would be absolutely correct.

Thinking about it now, except for the sisal hemp, none of the other plants are quite so distinctive. The shapes of the lychee and star fruit trees are rather commonplace. (You wouldn't at all expect trees with such a banal appearance to produce these strange and exotic fruits: the peels of lychees resemble the skin of red frogs; the cross section of a star fruit resembles a five-cornered star). Guava

知青点的屋前屋后长着荔枝树，番石榴树，杨桃树，苦楝树，贴着墙根还长有马齿笕，车前草和青苔，此外还有野山芋和五色花以及一种类似剑麻的东西，茎叶的顶端是一根又尖又硬的粗刺。

写到这里，我觉得我的笔下出现了一片繁茂的亚热带森林，如果你看过法国画家亨利·卢梭的画，就会觉得我笔下的植物也会如此壮硕、密集、础础逼人，而且还会有一头色彩斑斓的豹子出没其中。其实这都是误导。由于我也喜欢卢梭，并且经常看他的画，已经被误导得经常把他笔下的植物当成是我们知青点的了，在梦里的月色中，一株壮硕的剑麻隐隐发光，安容赤身裸体站在剑麻边，她背光站着，所以全身漆黑，但她身上曲线轮廓清晰，乳房丰满坚硬，优美而性感，她的头发一直垂到腰间（她什么时候长出这么长的头发来的呢？）并且从一侧肩膀流泻下来，她全身漆黑，我看不清楚她的脸，但她的眼珠子发出一种柔和的黄光，就像她身体内点着一盏明亮的灯。这种眼珠子放光的形象使人想起某种夜行动物。

当然你会说这像是亨利·卢梭的一幅画，而不是什么安容。你说的完全正确。

现在想来，除了剑麻之外，那些树都长得不够有特点，荔枝树和扬桃树的树形都很普通（你根本看不出这么普通的树还能长出那些稀奇古怪的果子，荔树皮像红色的蛤蟆，杨桃的截面则是一只标准的五角星），番石榴树有一点怪，但又比不上木瓜和芭蕉。还有就是，听起来我们的屋前屋后都长着果树，好像住在花果山上，这也是误导，荔枝树已经老得结不动果子了，杨桃是酸掉牙的那种，番石榴则又硬又涩，吃了就拉不出屎。写到这里我才发现，知青点所在的坡地上，除了树上长的水果不好吃外，草木不够年轻茂密，青苔不够绿也不够厚，车前草和马齿笕也不够肥美，剑麻更是没有长到跟人一样高，它最多长到我的小腿肚子。认清了这些事实，就把它与卢梭笔下的亚热带森林清楚地区分开了。

这片坡地经常笼罩在一片梦幻的夜色中，它白天的模样没有给我留下太深的印象。我看见安容白皙的身体躺在一张大芭蕉叶上（这张芭蕉叶是从哪里割来的呢？），她双腿曲着，两手放在胸前，好像是一手捂着一只乳房。有一个人跪在她的身边，他拿开她的手，把自己的手放在她的胸前。安容的手软绵绵的，一点都不像练过武功，能赤手

trees have a slightly more exotic appearance, but still they cannot compare to papaya and banana trees. Moreover, it would be a mistake to imagine that the environment of Zhiqing Corner resembles Monkey's mountain abode in *Journey to the West*. The lychee tree was so old that it wasn't producing fruit anymore. The star fruits were so sour they would make your teeth fall out. The guavas were so hard and bitter that they would give you constipation. Only at this point do I start to grasp the reality of the hillside where Zhiqing Corner stood. Not only were the fruits on the trees not very delicious, the plants were also not lush enough, the moss not green and thick enough, the plantain and purslane not luxuriant enough, and the sisal hemp never grew to the height of humans and reached at most to my calf. After recognizing this reality, I can now make a clear distinction between Zhiqing Corner and the subtropical forest in Rousseau's paintings.

This hillside was often couched in a fantastic shade of night. Its image in daylight has not left me with much of an impression. I see Anrong's fair-skinned body lying on a big banana leaf. (From where has this banana leaf been culled?) Her knees were bent; her hands were placed in front of her chest, and she seemed to be holding each of her breasts with one hand. A man was kneeling next to her. He removed her hands and placed his own over her breasts. Anrong's hands were as soft as cotton wool, and did not look like they belonged to someone who had been trained in the martial arts, someone who could knock down two or three men with her bare hands. Her soft hands were lifted from her in one quick gesture. The two of them were swaying under the moonlight. I suddenly remember that the man was Li Haijun. At the same time, I hear the river reverberate, and faintly smell the sweet fragrance of papaya in the air. These two things jolt me into a sudden realization: this wild union under the moonlight did not take place behind our house at Zhiqing Corner, but on the banks of River Shangli. Now everything makes sense. Li Haijun had a little knife with him. There were big banana leaves everywhere along the bank. He had cut two leaves off and placed them on the grass. Anrong lay on them, smooth and clean. These kinds of banana leaves were born with the skin of a beautiful woman and made a perfect mattress.

空拳撂倒两三个男人的样子，她软绵绵的手被人一拿就拿开了。两个人在月光中晃动，我想起那是李海军。与此同时，我听见河水流动的声音一阵又一阵地传过来，并且还闻到了空气中有一丝若有若无的熟木瓜的清甜味，这两种东西使我恍然大悟，原来这幅月下野合图不是发生在我们知青点的屋后，而是在上里河的河边，这时一切就顺理成章了。李海军身上带着一把小刀，沿岸的大芭蕉叶到处都是，他割下两张，铺在草上，安容躺在上面，又光滑又干净。这种芭蕉叶天生就是一副美人肌肤，很适合躺在上面。

我发现木瓜甜丝丝的气味不是从木瓜树上散发出来的，木瓜树虽然没有椰子树那么高，但站在树下同样不可能闻到果香，除非是狗。甜丝丝的气味从安容的身体上散发出来，这是李海军涂上去的，他在安容到来之前先割好了两张芭蕉叶，然后又爬上木瓜树摘下一只皮色泛黄的熟木瓜。他当时的念头是等安容来了之后切给她吃，但这只木瓜熟得太厉害，安容一口又咬得太大，一些瓜汁就沿着她的脖子流到了她的胸口，李海军顺理成章扑上去，这件事就有了新的开端。

安容的身体本来就像某种果肉，女孩子大概在十七八岁的时候都是这样。李海军在她的身上涂满了金黄色的木瓜汁之后，她的身体变成了一种新的果肉，就像某种杂交之后获得优势的新品种，全身上下散发出一种金黄色的半透明的光，非常迷人，邪魅。写到这里，我觉得李海军有些变态，他不但不抓紧时间干正事，反到耐着心，把木瓜汁在安容身上涂来涂去，甚至连胳膊窝和两腿之间也不放过，就像一名态度认真的木匠在上油漆，一层又一层，一遍又一遍，直到安容的每一个毛孔都充满了木瓜的金黄色汁液。然后他就蹲在一旁眯着眼睛上上下下看来看去，既不动手，也不动嘴。

我除了觉得李海军有点性变态之外，还认为他是一名唯美主义者，至少是一名美的爱好者。面对一个金黄色半透明的身体，李海军性欲顿消，他把木瓜扔掉之后就找出了一张纸和一枝笔，把安容的裸体画了下来。李海军属于那种有绘画天赋但技巧训练不过关的人，也许正是由于他技巧不够好，所以他笔下的安容裸体有一种别样的生动，但又由于构图不妥右下角空出了一大块，李海军画了一只木瓜，画面就稳住了。当然这是一幅线画，如果涂上颜色，会更加漂亮。

安容由于全身涂满了木瓜汁，皮肤又粘又闷，觉得很不舒服。这

I realize that the sweet scent of papaya was not emanating from the fruit tree. Papaya trees are not as tall as coconut trees but, unless you were a dog, you would not be able to smell the fruit standing under a papaya tree. The sweet fragrance came from Anrong's body. Li Haijun had smeared the juice on her. Before he came to Anrong, he had cut two pieces of banana leaves, and climbed up the tree to pluck a papaya which had become thoroughly yellow. His thought then was to wait for Anrong to come and then he would slice it for her. The fruit turned out to be too ripe and when Anrong took too big a bite, some juice travelled along her neck to her breasts. Going with the flow of events, Li Haijun threw himself at Anrong and the story took a new turn.

Anrong's body was already like a kind of fruit. All young women at the age of seventeen and eighteen are like that. After Li Haijun painted her with golden papaya juice, her body had become a new kind of fruit, like the quality creation of a complex cross-breeding. Her whole body emitted a golden translucent light, very seductive and depraved. Here I feel that Li Haijun was a little perverse. He did not put precious time to good use, but acted like a carpenter with a serious intent, patiently oiling Anrong's body with layers of papaya juice. He did not spare her underarms or her crotch. He painted, layer after layer, until Anrong's every pore was dripping with the golden juice. Then he squatted in one corner and looked at her here and there, without taking action either with his hand or his mouth.

I feel that aside from being a pervert, Li Haijun was also an aesthetician or at least a lover of beauty. Faced with a golden translucent body, his sexual desire immediately subsided. After he threw away the papaya peel, he took out a piece of paper and a pen, and drew a picture of Anrong naked. Li Haijun was the kind of artist who had talent but lacked technique and formal training. Perhaps due to such technical shortcomings, his image of Anrong was blessed with a different kind of liveliness. The lower right-hand corner of the picture was empty because of the imbalance in his composition. Li Haijun drew a piece of papaya there, and the picture was complete. Of course it was only a line drawing, and would be more beautiful if it had been drawn in colour.

点我很能理解，因为我曾经把西瓜汁涂在脸上做美容，并由此推理出任何果汁涂在皮肤上都不会使人感到舒服。但由于果汁的透气度要比别的物质好一点，所以又不至于憋死人。别的物质指的是金粉，我曾在《三联生活周刊》看到过一幅图片，一名美艳的好莱坞女演员全身涂满了金粉，因皮肤窒息而死，她全裸的身上闪耀着着一层僵硬的金光。杂志上没有告诉我更多的前因后果，但我觉得这个创意比较愚蠢，不如身上涂满木瓜汁更有诗意和视觉效果。

安容全身涂满木瓜汁之后就觉得像是穿上了一件粘度很大的软呼呼的紧身衣，而且这件衣服很像一种款式新潮的泳装，正面厚薄不匀，后背全裸。写到这里我明白了李海军的木瓜汁只涂在了安容的正面，他对安容的后背不如正面感兴趣。由此可见，涂了木瓜的安容不是她自己所说的那么难受，因为她的背后是完全透气的，她嘟囔说自己又粘又闷其实是想让李海军赶快扔掉纸和笔跟她玩。她身上即然已经涂上甜汁，意识上也随之变得有些色情。她说：李海军，你来不来，不来我就穿上衣服了。她扭来扭去，扭出了各种各样妩媚的姿势，李海军把其中的一个姿势画了下来，看上去是一幅十分美妙的裸女图。

李海军把裸女图摆在了正对着床的桌子上，安容看了自己赤身裸体妖娆的样子也十分喜爱（据我所知，许多女人都很爱惜自己的身体），她不错眼地望这幅画，就把正面的紧身衣忘了。

由于出现了床，桌子，纸和笔，所以这一次就不是在上里河河边的芭蕉叶上，而是在游兵散勇李海军的宿舍里。而且从光线来看，也是应该如此，不然安容涂了再多的木瓜汁也不会在河岸的黑暗中呈现出金黄的颜色。以上所说，是记忆之误，或者是传说之误。

安容的这幅裸体画我曾经看到过，它是由谁，在什么情况下传到我手里的我已经忘记了。那是我长到十七岁第一次看到裸体画，我被吓了一跳。脸红耳热，心跳如鼓，但又充满了强烈的好奇。我在一个光线幽暗的角落（是学校的宿舍还是知青点？）里仔细观看这幅画，在我看来，那些曲线充满了夸张和动感，乳房比腰大，屁股比肩膀大，虽大却又不笨重，还有点扭来扭去的活动劲，媚眼一看也有点像安容。我把它夹在笔记本里，不知怎么就不见了。很多年后我看到意大利画家莫迪里阿尼的裸妇画，感到十分眼熟，并且立刻就产生了亲切感。我一下就把莫迪里阿尼这么长这么拗口的名字给记住了，我一直不清

Anrong felt very uncomfortable with the papaya juice sticking to her skin and clogging up her pores. I understand her predicament very well, because I once used melon juice for a facial treatment, and could deduce from the experience that any kind of fruit juice on the face would cause discomfort. Still, at least fruit juice is more porous than other substances and would not choke a person to death. When I say other substances I am thinking of gold powder. I once saw in a magazine a picture of a Hollywood actress who had died of clogged pores. Her naked body shone with a solidified sheen of golden light. The magazine did not say much about the cause or circumstances of her death, but I feel that this idea was rather stupid. Painting the body with papaya juice is more poetic and visually more stunning.

After being smeared all over with papaya juice, Anrong felt like she was wearing a soft and sticky body suit, one which resembled a stylish swimming costume. The front part of the suit was uneven in thickness and the back was completely bare. At this point I realize that Li Haijun had only put papaya juice on Anrong's front; he was not as interested in Anrong's back. From this fact we can deduce that Anrong was not as uncomfortable as she claimed. After all, her back could still breathe. She only complained about being sticky and clogged up because she wanted Li Haijun to throw away his pen and paper and play with her. Since her body was already covered with sweet juice, her consciousness had also taken a lustful turn. She said, Li Haijun, are you coming? If you're not coming, I'll put on my clothes. She swayed her body and struck all kinds of seductive poses. Li Haijun drew a picture after one of these poses, and it looked like a splendid nude portrait.

Because of the appearance of a bed, a desk, a piece of paper, and a pen, this scene could not possibly take place by the bank of River Shangli, but rather in Li Haijun's military quarters. The lighting of the portrait seemed to support this. Otherwise, no amount of papaya juice could give Anrong a golden glow in the dark of the river bank. Everything I said before was based on confused memory or groundless rumours.

楚我跟这位异国画家有什么神秘的缘分。写到这里我才想起来，李海军当年的那幅安容裸体跟莫迪里阿尼笔下的裸妇有几分神似。

我之所以在这里提到莫迪里阿尼，除了上述原因，还想说明李海军画的裸体线画大致还算得上是艺术作品，而不能认为人家画的是春宫图，这是一个原则问题。但七几年的时候的原则是乱的。带队干部罗同志也认为是一个原则问题，他的原则是，本大队知青中流传着一幅黄色下流的裸体画，如果不清除毒害，知青的思想就会变质。

如果我是罗同志我也会这样想，因为罗同志是工人出身，多年来受党的教育，头脑简单，感情朴素，除了以上想法他不会再有别的想法。

事情发展到这一步，如果往下推，就会出现批斗的场面。但事实上并不是这样，这一切还是要归功于李庆霖，因为他给毛主席写了那封著名的信，知青就受到了保护，不能随便批斗。事实证明，不单是我一个人喜欢提起李庆霖，97年夏天我在《文摘》报上看到有关李庆霖的报道，现在是1998年2月份，我又从《南方周末》和《今日名流》上看到了李庆霖，这使我相信，越来越多的人正在想起或将要想起李庆霖，即使在他百年之后我们也还是要想起他，到那时，李庆霖同志永垂不朽这样的口号将从我的内心深处缓缓升起，这比革命先烈的永垂不朽更要让我牢记在心。

批斗的场面没有出现，罗同志要让安容写检查，但又不好跟安容谈话，他就把我叫到水塘村知青点。我坐下之后，罗同志还在抽水烟，烟嘴里噗噗地吐出水烟屎。对于这件事，罗同志心情紧张，难以启齿。事隔多年之后我才想到，虽然是带队干部，也会有他不成熟的地方，特别是面对一个本队女知青的裸体画的时候，免不了大受冲击，手忙脚乱，面红耳热。他看到安容的裸体画就像看到安容本人的裸体，产生了严重的犯罪感，他立刻就把这张黄色画夹在了笔记本里。他对送来这幅画的知青说：你先回去吧，我会严肃处理。

按照《红楼梦》第七十三回“痴丫头误拾绣春囊，懦小姐不问累金凤”的说法，绣着两个人赤条条相抱的绣春囊是要由傻大姐拾着的，但我直到现在也弄不清楚这个交上裸体画的傻大姐到底是谁。我们知青点一共五个人，女的除了我和安容就是周红，她胆子小，又不打算当先进知青，我觉得不会是她。这样看来，傻大姐就有可能是大赖，

I had seen this nude portrait of Anrong before. I don't remember how I had come by this picture. I was seventeen and it was the very first time I had looked at a nude portrait. I was in total shock. My face was red, my ears were hot, and my heart was thumping like a drum beat. At the same time, I was filled with an overpowering curiosity. In a faintly lit corner (was it at the school quarters or at Zhiqing Corner?), I examined the picture carefully. In my eyes, the contour and movement of Anrong's body were exaggerated. Her breasts were fuller than her waist; her buttocks were larger than her shoulders. Large but not clumsy. The image even suggested a swaying movement. The visage of the woman in the picture resembled Anrong a bit. I kept the picture inside a notebook, but later lost it without remembering how. Many years after, I encountered the nude portraits by the Italian painter Amadeo Modigliano. They struck a chord of familiarity and I felt an intimacy towards them. Immediately, I was able to remember the long and difficult name Modigliano. I never understood the mysterious connection I had with this foreign painter. Only now do I realise that the portrait drawn by Li Haijun then resembles Modigliano's nudes.

I mentioned Modigliano not only for the above reason. I also want to point out that Li Haijun's nude portrait is not just a piece of pornography, but could in general be considered a work of art. I say this as a matter of principle. During the seventies, however, principles were confused. Comrade Luo, who was the leading cadre of our brigade, also thought it was a matter of principle. His principle was as follows: a pornographic picture was circulating amongst the youths in his brigade; their thoughts would become contaminated if the poison was not eliminated.

If I were Comrade Luo, I would no doubt think the same. Comrade Luo was a worker who had been educated by the Party for years. His mind was simple; his feelings were uncomplicated. He could not possibly think otherwise.

Now that events had unfolded in this way, you would quite logically anticipate scenes of struggle. However, things were different in reality, thanks to Li Qinglin, who wrote that famous letter to Chairman Mao and protected sent-down youths from

不会是别人。但这个推理也有不合情理之处，如果我是男知青，拾着一个漂亮女知青的裸体画，我一定不会上交，而是自己留着看。所以有时想来我还是免不了搞不清楚这个男的傻大姐到底是不是大赖。

罗同志抽完烟之后说：有一件事。我觉得他有一点紧张，所以我就觉得他的“有一件事”说得很突兀，但他更突然地站了起来，到他的床头拿出了他的笔记本，这时他才意识到，把夹着安容裸体画的笔记本从自己的枕边拿出来甚不妥，但是已经晚了。他把笔记本举在手里停了一会儿，然后他又说：有一件事。

我很迷惘地望着他，他坐到我对面的条凳子上翻着笔记本，过了一会儿，他又说：有一件事。这使我困惑不解。他忽然把那张画从笔记本里抽了出来，说：你看看，这安容。这时我再此看到了安容夸张的裸体。这跟第一次单独看时有所不同。因为旁边有一个罗同志，我觉得安容的裸体更加性感，因而触目惊心。所以我就面红耳赤地愣在了那里，一名话都说不出来。

这种情况使罗同志误认为我很纯洁。其实有时内心充满邪念和思无邪（不知道这个词这样用对不对）是一样的，毛主席的辩证法里没有说，罗同志就只看到了事情的一面。他把画重新夹回笔记本里，说：算了，你先回去吧。

这件事就这样结束了。

我不知道罗同志后来是否找安容谈话了，但可以断定，安容是不会去写什么劳什子（这是我们这代人的口头禅，本来是贾宝玉说的，盖因毛主席号召大家读一点《红楼梦》，我们就记住了贾宝玉的只言片语）检查的，她会挺起酥胸对罗同志说：对呀，这画的正是我，你看画得像不像？

罗同志就说：安容，你严肃一点！

安容又挺了一下身子，微笑着说：我没有什么不严肃的呀，我很严肃。说完她就鼓起腮帮子让罗同志看。她催道：罗同志你看，我是不是很严肃？

罗同志看了鼓起腮帮子的安容，内心深处觉得她有点可爱。但他只敢看她的腮帮子，没敢看她的眼睛，她的眼睛跟画上太像了，风情万种，若看了眼睛就会立即联想到那幅裸体。既不敢看眼睛，挺起的前胸就更不敢看，这可以理解，因为女人的胸部在男人看来总是有点

critiques. There are facts to prove that I am not the only person who likes Li Qinglin. In the summer of 1997, I read a report on Li Qinglin in an issue of *Digest*. It is now February, 1998, and I read about Li Qinglin again in *Southern Weekend* and *Today's Rich and Famous*. This leads me to believe that a lot of people are or will be thinking of Li Qinglin. Even after he has passed away, we will still remember him. When that time arrives, the slogan "Comrade Li Qinglin lives forever" will slowly rise from the depths of my heart. More so even than the immortal memory of our honourable revolutionary heroes, this slogan will be lodged firmly in my mind.

So, scenes of struggle did not appear. Comrade Luo wanted Anrong to write a report on the matter but could not bring himself to talk to her. Instead, he called me to Zhiqing Corner in Pond Village. After I had sat down, Comrade Luo started smoking a water pipe. Tobacco ashes bubbled in the mouth of the pipe. Comrade Luo appeared to be very nervous and could not even raise the subject of Anrong. Only years afterwards did I realize that even a leading cadre had his immature side, especially when faced with a nude portrait of one of the female youths in his brigade. He could not help feeling overwhelmed. His behaviour was clumsy, his face and ears were flushed. He felt severe guilt as soon as he looked at Anrong's image and immediately hid this pornographic picture in between the pages of his notebook. He said to the youth who brought this picture, you can go now, I will deal with this matter seriously.

According to chapter seventy-three of *Dream of the Red Chamber*, in which "the idiotic maid was mistakenly given an erotic sachet; the cowardly mistress ignored the matter and affected Jinfeng," the erotic sachet embroidered with two naked bodies huddled together is found by the Silly Maid. Even now, I cannot be sure of the identity of the Silly Maid who handed in Anrong's nude portrait. There were five of us at Zhiqing Corner. Amongst the women, besides Anrong and me, there was only Zhou Hong. She was a coward and had no ambition to be a progressive youth, so in my opinion it couldn't have been her. In that case, our Silly Maid would have to be Da Lai and no one else. Yet this doesn't seem logical either. If I were a young man who found a beautiful nude portrait of a female comrade, I would

色情，看了裹在衣服里的胸部跟看了人家的裸体没什么两样。

为了镇定自己，罗同志又坐下抽烟。安容觉得谈话已经告了一个段落，就假装蹣跚着脚出去了。

事隔多年，一切都已烟消云散，但如同李庆霖永垂不朽（这是将来要说的话，现在预先说了）一样，安容那幅夸张的裸体画也永垂不朽。那是安容自由精神的象征，它流动的线条在我的视野里飘舞、飞动，落在干净而宽大的芭蕉叶上，上里河红色的流水和红色的卵石给它涂上了一层温暖的红色，画面右下角的那只木瓜也由青变黄，散发出往昔的香气。

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never have handed it in! I would have kept it for my own pleasure. For this reason I am still not sure if Da Lai was indeed our male Silly Maid.

After Comrade Luo smoked his cigarette, he said, there's this matter. I felt that he was a bit nervous, and the way he said "there's this matter" was very awkward. He suddenly stood up and picked up the notebook by his bed. Only then did he become conscious that it would appear inappropriate that he had kept Anrong's picture in a notebook by his pillow. By then it was already too late. He held the notebook up in his hand for a little while, and then said again, there's this matter.

I looked at him in confusion. He sat on the bench across from me, and flipped through his notebook. After a while, he said again, there's this matter. This confused me to no end. Suddenly, he took the picture out of the notebook and said, you see, this Anrong. It was at that moment that I saw Anrong's nude portrait again. This was different from the time I looked at it on my own, because now there was a Comrade Luo sitting next to me. I felt that Anrong's naked body was even sexier. My heart was pounding. I sat there, stunned and blushing. I was unable to utter a single word.

Comrade Luo mistook my reaction to be an expression of my innocence. Actually, sometimes being filled with evil thoughts and "thinking no evil" (I don't know if it's appropriate to use this phrase from the Classics here) is the same thing. Chairman Mao did not mention this in his dialectic theory, and Comrade Luo could only see one side of the matter. He put the picture back in the notebook and said, forget it, you can go now.

The matter was thus concluded.

I don't know if Comrade Luo asked for Anrong afterwards, but I am sure that Anrong would not write some damned nuisance (this expression was very popular with our generation; it was originally used by Jia Baoyu, and because Chairman Mao told everyone to read a bit of *Dream of the Red Chamber*, we remembered Jia Baoyu's words out of context) of a confession. She would flaunt her alluring breasts and say to Comrade Luo, yes, this is a portrait of me, do you think it's a good representation?

Comrade Luo would say, Anrong, be serious!

Anrong straightened her body and said with a smile, I am being very serious. Then she puffed up her cheeks in mock seriousness for Comrade Luo's benefit. Look, Comrade Luo, she pressured him, am I not very serious?

Anrong's mock serious expression was not lost on Comrade Luo who, deep down, found her quite endearing. However, he only dared to look at her cheeks and not her eyes. Her eyes were too much like the seductively expressive eyes in the portrait. If he looked at her eyes, he would immediately think of the nude portrait. In other words, looking at her eyes would be like looking at her naked body. And since he could not even look at her eyes, he could look even less at her breasts. This is quite understandable, as men always become a bit aroused when they look at women's breasts. For them, looking at a woman's breasts through her clothes is not so different from looking at her naked body.

To calm himself, Comrade Luo sat down to smoke again. Anrong felt that the conversation had already ended. She left the room, pretending to walk on tiptoe.

Years passed and everything has vanished like ashes and dust, but just as Comrade Li Qinglin lives forever (these are words from the future, I am only making a prediction), so does Anrong's nude portrait. It is a symbol of Anrong's free spirit. In my vision, its flowing contour is dancing in the air. It rises and then falls on an ample and unspoiled banana leaf. The red pebbles in the flowing red water of River Shangli casts a warm crimson hue on it. The papaya in the right lower corner has also turned from green to yellow, emanating the sweet fragrance of the past.

千人一面

王安忆