

DEEPING YELLOWS

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I light a joint, which is illegal. Getting high in the shower with me is a bucket. The bucket is upside down. My phone is playing the song *Yellow Magic* (1978). Warm water from the shower lands on the back of my neck, runs down my chest, and drips from the tip of my penis onto the bucket, making an *empty* sound. Years later, I hear the same sound in the documentary, *Ryuichi Sakamoto: Coda* (2017). In one scene, Sakamoto is seen standing in the rain holding a bucket over his head and listening to the sound of the rain landing on the bucket. His bucket is blue. Mine is yellow.

It is the summer of 2014. I am a student studying film in Canada, currently visiting my parents in Hong Kong over the break. This is Tung Chung, where I grew up, ten minutes from the Hong Kong International Airport. There is an outlet mall downstairs where Mainland Chinese tourists shop for discounted goods before their flight. Luxury goods are more expensive in Mainland China. I've never bought anything from the mall. Perhaps because it's too close to where I live.

It is 2020. I did not become a filmmaker. I am, instead, a writing teacher. “Please take out a piece of paper and try to translate the music you’re about to hear into words,” I tell my class. “Just write whatever comes to your mind.” I connect my laptop to the sound system and play *Yellow Magic* on Spotify.

One of my students writes:

I hate this song.	I ate this song.	I late this song.	I Kate this song.
I mate this song.	I date this song.	I Cate this song.	I rate this song.
I Yates this song.	I pate this song.	I sate this song.	I fate this song.
I gate this song.	I bate this song.	I Nate this song.	It reminds me of Zelda.
I want to fuck Zelda.	Hard.	I hate this song.	I want Zelda to fuck me.

The student is a retired surgeon. Her name is Mindy. She is from London, Ontario.

The song, *Yellow Magic*, reminds me of something my hairdresser once told me. A friend of his started a business—a small place in the middle of Shinjuku—for people to take naps. People usually visit around three in the afternoon—the best time to nap. He tells me all of this while I am getting a perm. My hairdresser removes a curler from my head.

You once told me, with genuine concern, that my head was too flat. “More volume on the top will make you look better,” you said. You also recommended that I avoid hats. “You look terrible with hat hair,” you said.

I look at myself in the mirror at the hair salon. There are thirteen curlers on my head; eight of them are pink, and none of them are yellow. You also told me once that I'd look terrible bald. My hair uncurls from one of the pink curlers. I imagine myself standing in the rain, holding a bucket over my head, listening, and hoping that I don't go bald.

The lyrics to *Yellow Magic* are sparse. In fact, the nine lines don't come in until halfway through the song.

*You know about me?
My name is Tong Poo!
I'm running from far away!
Let's dance!
Let's dance with me!
Feel me come!
The press of Tong Poo!
Let's dance!
Let's dance with me!*

Yellow Magic is considered disco music. I find out that Ryuichi Sakamoto's writing of the song was inspired by Chinese classical music and the cultural revolution (whatever that means). But who the fuck is Tong Poo? And "Feel me come!?" Tong Poo only exists in the song, I find out in the documentary. And Ryuichi Sakamoto is diagnosed with oropharyngeal cancer.

I hate this song. I ate this song. I late this song. It reminds me of Zelda.

Which Zelda? Fitzgerald? The one I want to fuck? The character in the Nintendo game?

I go home to Toronto, to a condo. It is small. You are not home. I think about giving you a call to ask where you are and maybe tell you about the nap business. I also want to read to you what Mindy from London, Ontario submitted for the exercise. I hear a *beep*. The dishes are clean. I forget to call you. I open the dishwasher. Steam emerges. The dishwasher is empty. I check the upper rack and then the lower one. All I find is a single chopstick. It is made of wood. It is warm.