

ZhuZiqing beiyǐng
朱自清 背影

wǒ yǔ fùqīn bù xiāngjiàn yǐ yǒu èr nián yúle , wǒ zuì bùnéng wàngjì de shì tā nà dōngtiān , zǔmǔ sǐle ,
我與父親不相見已有二年餘了，我最不能忘記的是他的背影。那年冬天，祖母死了，
fùqīn de chāshǐ yě jiāoxièle , zhèng shì huò bùdānxíng de rìzi , wǒ cóng běijīng dào xúzhōu , dǎsuan gēn fùqīn bēnsāng huíjiā 。 dào
父親的差使也交卸了，正是禍不單行的日子，我從北京到徐州，打算跟父親奔喪回家。到
xúzhōu jiàn zhǔ fùqīn , kànjiàn mǎnyuàn lángjí de dōngxi , yòu xiǎngqǐ zǔmǔ , bùjīn sù sù de liúxià yǎnlèi 。 fùqīn shuō : 「 shì
徐州見著父親，看見滿院狼藉的東西，又想起祖母，不禁簌簌地流下眼淚。父親說：「事
yǐ rúci , bùbì nǎnguò , hǎo zài tiān wú jué rén zhī lù ! 」
已如此，不必難過，好在天無絕人之路！」

biānmài diǎnzhi hǎile kùkǒng jiè qián bànle sāngshì zhèxiē rìzi jiāzhōng guāngjǐng hěn cǎndàn yíban
回家變賣典質，父親還了虧空，又借錢辦了喪事。這些日子，家中光景很是慘淡，一
wǎnle fùqīn wǎnbi yào nánjīng mǒushì niànshū
半為了喪事，一半為了父親賦閒。喪事完畢，父親要到南京謀事，我也要回到北京唸書，
wǒmen biāntóngxíng
我們便同行。

My Father's Silhouette

by ZhuZiQing

1 For two years I have not seen my father, yet the memory of watching his silhouette from behind is very much still with me. In that winter my grandmother passed away, and my father left his job. It was those days that misfortunate events seemed never come alone. I came home from Beijing to meet my father, and join him in Xuzhou for the funeral. At home I saw dad, and the courtyard being left with messy things. At that moment my thought of my grandmother came through and I couldn't hold back my tear. "What happened had happened," Dad said. "Don't be so sad. There are always some ways out."

2 Back to home we sold valuables to pay back old debt, then borrowed more for the funeral. Financially the prospect didn't look good, partly because of the funeral, and partly because my dad had become redundant. To look for jobs my father wanted to move to Nanjing. I needed to return to my study in Beijing. Together we started out the journey.

到南京時，有朋友約去遊逛，勾留了一日；第二日上午便須渡江到浦口，下午上車北
 去。父親因為事忙，本已說定不送我，叫旅館裡一個熟識的茶房陪我同去。他再三囑咐茶
 房，甚是仔細。但他終於不放心，怕茶房不妥貼，頗躊躇了一會。其實我那年已二十歲，
 北京已來往過兩三次，是沒有甚麼要緊的了。他躊躇了一會，終於決定還是自己送我去。

我兩三回勸他不必去；他只說：「不要緊，他們去不好！」

我們過了江，進了車站。我買票，他忙著照看行李。行李太多了，得向腳夫行些小費，
 才可過去。他便又忙著和他們講價錢。我那時真是聰明過份，總覺他說話不大漂亮，非
 自己插嘴不可。但他終於講定了價錢，就送我上車。他給我揀定了靠車門的一張椅子，我

3 We arrived at Nanjing and stayed to joined my friends for a tour. Next morning we crossed the river to Pukou to catch up an afternoon train travelling north to Beijing. Dad already told me he was busy and would not able to see me off. He got hold of staff in the guesthouse whom he knew well and let them help me to the journey. He gave instructions to assure himself in every details. But he hesitated, worrying that the staff may not done the job good enough. Actually it was not a great deal to me, for already at the age of 20 I have been travelling to and fro Beijing twice or more. Still my father, after a while of hesitation, finally decided that he better go with me. I tried to convince him, for several times, that he didn't need to see me off himself. "It really doesn't matter to me," he explained. "They won't do good!"

4 We crossed the river and arrived the train station. While I went out to purchase the train ticket, my father was busy working on the luggages. Because there are plenty of luggages we need to hire porters. My father negotiated the fee with the porters. But I was then so full of myself, immediately felt his clumsiness in the conversation, and would like to intervene myself. Finally dad had agreed a fee and he sent me off to the train. He picked a seat near the train door, ...

... and I set over the seat chair the purple coat that he gave me. Dad told me to take care in the journey, beware at night time and not catching the cold. He also gave instructions to the guesthouse staff to look after me. Inside me I actually teased him of his naivety. What the guesthouse staff would only know was money, it was a waste to put a trust on them! After all I was already a grown up. Can I not look after myself? Well, now thinking back, I was being too clever.

5 "Good bye, Papa." I bid farewell. My father took a glance outside the coach. "Stay here, don't move around," he said. "Let me buy you a few oranges." I looked over to the platform, where outside the fence there are hawkers selling things and waiting for customers. But to land on the platform at the other side one must cross over the rail lines, and need to jump down and climb up. My father was a fat man. Naturally it was a task demanding to him. I volunteered to go, but upon his insistence I could only let him go. I watched my father, who wore a black cap, a black cloth jacket in a dark green cloth gown, staggered towards the edge of the railway. It was not too difficult to lower the body down, the tricky bit was that over the other side he need to climb up the platform.

jiāng zuò zǐ mào dāyī pú zuòwéi zhū lúshàng xiǎoxīn yèlǐ jǐngxǐng búyào shuāng yòu zhǔtuō
將他給我做的紫毛大衣鋪好坐位。他囑我路上小心，夜裡要警醒些，不要受涼。又囑托茶
fáng hǎohǎo zhào yīng 。 wǒ xīnlǐ ànxixiǎo yǔ ; tāmen zhǐ rēndé tuō zhī bái 。 èrqiè zhèyàng niánjì
房好好照應我。我心裡暗笑他的迂；他們只認得錢，托他們直是白托！而且我這樣大年紀
de rén , nǎndào hái bù néng liào lǐ zìjǐ ? āi , wǒ xiànzài xiǎngxiǎng , nàshí zhēn shì tài cōngmíngliǎo 。
的人，難道還不能料理自己麼？唉，我現在想想，那時真是太聰明了。

shuōdao bāba nǐ zǒu ba 。 wǎng wài kānē kān 。 wǒ jǐ gè júzi 。 nǐ jiù zài cǐ dì
我說道：「爸爸，你走吧。」他往車外看了看，說，「我買幾個橘子去。你就在此地

zōudòng 。 wǒ kàn nà biānyuè tái de zhānlán wài yǒu jǐ gè wǎng dōng xī dōng de děngzhe gùkè 。 zǒu dào nà biānyuè tái ,
不要走動。」我看那邊月臺的柵欄外有幾個賣東西的等著顧客。走到那邊月臺，須穿過

tiědào , xià xiàqù , pá shàngqù 。 fùqīn shì yí gè pàngzi , zǒu guò qù zìrán yào fèi shì 。 wǒ běn lái yào qù de , tā bù
鐵道，須跳下去又爬上去。父親是一個胖子，走過去自然要費事些。我本來要去的，他不

kān zhǐhǎo ràng wǒ kàn jiàn tā dāi zhe hēi bù xiǎomào , chuān zhe hēi bù dà mǎ shù , shēn qīng bù mian pào , pǎo pán pán
肯，只好讓他去。我看見他戴著黑布小帽，穿著黑布大馬褂，深青布棉袍，蹣跚地走到鐵

dào biān , màn màn tàn shēn xià qù , shàng bù dà nán 。 kě shì tā chuān guò tiě dào , yào pá shàng nà biān yuè tái , jiù bù róng yì le 。 tā yòng
道邊，慢慢探身下去，尚不大難。可是他穿過鐵道，要爬上那邊月臺，就不容易了。他用

..., He clung onto the top with both hands, folded his legs upwards and swung the body a bit to the left. The movement was slight but in a way highlighting the great effort he spent. When I looked at dad from behind, I found myself crying, my tears came down quickly. Afraid of me being seen crying by my father, or anybody else in that matter, I hastily wiped the tears away. When I looked outside, my father had already held the red oranges, walking to return. After crossing the railway lines, he placed the oranges on the ground, climbed down slowly picked up the oranges and walked again. I hurried to help him out when he come back to this side of the station. We went back to the train, and with all the oranges he got he placed them on my leather coat, brushed the dust away from his own coat he seemed easy and relax. "I am off now," he said to me after a while. "Send me a letter when you arrive there!" I watched him leaving, though after a few steps he turned his head round. Looking at me he said, "Go back in, there is nobody inside." I waited, till I can no longer find a trace of him as the image of his back disappearing, joining the flow of crowd. I went inside, sit down, and come my tears again.

道邊，慢慢探身下去，尚不大難。可是他穿過鐵道，要爬上那邊月臺，就不容易了。他用
liǎngshǒu pǎnzhe shàngmian liǎngjiǎo zài xiàngshàng suō tā fēipàng de shēnzi xiàng wǎi qīng xiǎn chū nǔlì yángzī zhè
兩手攀著上面，兩腳再向上縮，他肥胖的身子向左微傾，顯出努力的樣子。這時我看見他
lèi kuàidì liú xiàlái wǒ gǎnjǐn shì shànle bǐeren
的背影，我的淚很快地流下來了。我趕緊拭幹了淚，怕他看見，也怕別人看見。我再向外
bào le zhǐhong
看時，他已抱了朱紅的橘子往回走了。過鐵道時，他先將橘子散放在地上，自己慢慢爬下
xià
再抱起桔子走。到這邊時，我趕緊去攙他。他和我走到車上，將橘子一股腦兒放在我的
yīgǎnǎo er
皮大衣上。於是撲撲衣上的泥土，心裡很輕鬆似的，過一會說：「我走了，到那邊來信！」
lǎixin
「我望著他走出去。他走了幾步，回過頭看見我，說：「進去吧，裏邊沒人。」等他的背
wàngzhe tā zǒu chūqù tā zǒu le jǐbù huíguò tóu kànjiàn wǒ shuō jìnqù ba lǐbian méi rén dēng
影混入來來往往的人裡，再找不著了，我便進來坐下，我的眼淚又來了。」
hūnrú lái lái wǎng wǎng de rén lǐ zài zhǎo bù zhe le wǒ biàn jìn lái zuò xià wǒ de yǎnlèi yòu lái le lǎilèi

jìn niánlai fùqīn wǒ dōu dōngbēnxīzǒu jiāzhōng guāngjǐng shì yī rì bù rú yī rì tā shǎonián chūwài móushēng dú
 近幾年來，父親和我都是東奔西走，家中光景是一日不如一日。他少年出外謀生，獨
 zhīchí zuòle xǔduō dàshì nǎ zhī huánjìng què rú cǐ lèitáng tā chù mù wǔng huāi zì rán qíng bù néng zì jǐ qíng yú zhōng
 立支持，做了許多大事。哪知環境卻如此頹唐！他觸目傷懷，自然情不能自己。情郁於中
 zì rán yào fā zhī wài jiā tīng suǒ xié chū nǚ dài jiàn jiàn bù tóng wǎng rì dàn zuì jìn liǎng nián bù jiàn
 自然要發之於外，家庭瑣屑便往往觸他之怒。他待我漸漸不同往日。但最近兩年不見，
 wéiqūè zhǐshì diàn jǐ zhe èr zǐ hòu xiě fēng xìn
 他終於忘卻我的不好，只是惦記著我，惦記著我的兒子。我北來後，他寫了一封信給我，
 xìn zhōng shuō dào wǒ shēn tǐ píng ān wéi bǎng zǐ tēng tòng lì hǎi jǔ zhǔ tí bǐ zhū duō bù biàn dà yuē dà qù zhī qī yuǎn yǐ
 信中說道，「我身體平安，惟膀子疼痛利害，舉箸提筆，諸多不便，大約大去之期不遠矣
 。」
 wǒ dú dào cǐ chù zài jīng líng de lèi guāng zhōng yòu kàn jiàn nà fēi péng de qīng bù máo bào hēi bù mǎ shù de bèi yǐng āi
 我讀到此處，在晶瑩的淚光中，又看見那肥胖的，青布棉袍，黑布馬褂的背影。唉！
 bù zhī hé shí zài néng yǔ tā xiāng jiàn
 我不知何時再能與他相見！

6 In the past years, my father and I have to travel all over the places to make ends meet. The family have, over the time, gone downhill. At a young age my father has already left home for work, became independent and accomplished a lot of major achievements. How can it be conceived that the situation would deteriorate to such a low state! Sadly, making the sense of what was happening naturally can't help but made him sorrow. The emotion kept inside had built up, wanting for release. Sometimes trivial things happened in the family irritated him, and he no longer treated me in the same way as he did before. In the past two years we haven't seen each other, he finally forgive my shortcomings, thinking me and my son. After I come back to the north he wrote to me. "I am well, although there are severe shoulder pains which made it difficult to use chopsticks or to pick up pens. it caused me a lot inconvenience," he said in the letter. "Perhaps it won't be too long to say goodbye for good!" When I read to this, I saw in the tears again the view that I had seen before. A fat body, dressed in a green cloth gown and a black cloth jacket. Oh, I don't know when I am going to see my father again!

October 1925 in Beijing.

7

Yī jiǔ èr wǔ shí
 1925年10月在北京

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