

One day, I secretly made up a decision in my mind “I will try my best to become a novelist from now on”. After that, I rarely try other genres since I have to work and can only focus on one thing. As long as I have spare time to write, I devote myself to novel creation and take great pains with every detail. That’s why I can’t train myself to write modern poetry or proses and so on. When I was young, I was keen to write in different ways, almost all types of them. I even felt like to be a pure poet in college. It is completely impossible because they are absolutely different things. It is like the discrepancy between Marathon and four-hundred-meter hurdle races. It’s impossible to be a poet or essayist anymore under the situation that I haven’t practiced them for a long time.

Well, if someone comes to ask me to write things irrelevant to novel, what should I do? They could be various kinds of comments, prefaces, recommendations, special columns or book reviews. Of course, I’m pretty glad that people are willing to invite me to do them a favor and I would definitely do my best, too. Nevertheless, I just cannot make it though I may know what a “suitable” style will be. It will be rather difficult to write even though I’d like to spend time to think over, and revise them. Consequently, I suppose it may sound a little bit lazy of me. However, I would rather write what I am pretty good at than do something which I am not competent to. Therefore, as you have read in this book, those articles would mostly be grouped into “Essay Collection” from their types or formations. However, I truly feel guilty that they could be classified as real “prose”.

I prefer to do what I am good at. It’s kind of like that you chat with good friends in an izakaya or bistro when you do not have to work the very next day. You get slightly drunk, feel like to stay up

longer, and then order two more appetizers to feel more comfortable. Suddenly, you start talking something you like insensibly. You would even dare to start a story like “Fang Ming Chen always laughs easily” or “I love to punish kids”. You keep on talking without considering whether they would catch up with you, are curious about it, or it’s time to go home. It is because you assume that they are your best friends, and it is fine to be presumptuous and talk nonsense. They would tolerate you instead of beating you up with rage or nagging you by saying that “you can eat whatever you want, but you cannot say whatever’s in your mind wantonly!” No matter how strange an article will be, I always have an excuse that “I am trying to express myself as honestly as possible because I’m a novelist”.

某天我暗自在心裡決定：「從今天開始，我要認真地成為一個小說家。」之後，就很少主動寫其他文類的作品。因為要一邊去上班一邊寫作，能夠空出來的時間實在太少了，所以只能專心做一件事情，一有空寫作的話，只能全部想著小說的事情，各種細節不厭其煩地考慮，自然沒辦法去鍛鍊現代詩或是散文等等的寫法。年輕一點的時候，熱中於嘗試不同的寫作方式，不用說什麼都會寫一點，大學時代甚至一度想要成為純粹的詩人，但現在已經完全不行了，畢竟是截然不同的東西，就像跑馬拉松跟四百公尺跨欄的差異度，疏於練習這麼久的狀況下，我已經不可能成為詩人或者是散文家了。

那麼，總還是會有人來找我寫跟小說無關的東西的時候怎麼辦呢？各式各樣的感想、序文、推薦、專欄或是書評，我當然很高興人家願意來找我寫，只要答應了也一定會想好好寫，可是怎麼辦呢，雖然知道「合適的」文體應該是什麼樣子，但卻沒辦法寫出來，就算花時間一一思考、整修，也會十分勉強。於是我想（也有些偷懶），要做這樣勉強自己性格與技術不足的事情，不如乾脆地只寫自己會寫的東西就好了，因此就像您在這本書裡讀到的，這書從文章類型與組成形式上來看，必定會被歸類為「散文集」，不過我實在很心虛將這樣的作品跟真正的「散文」放在同一個籃子裡。

因為與其說是寫文章給陌生的讀者讀，不如說是在挑擅長的聊天題材，就像是隔天不用上班的日子，在居酒屋或是小酒館裡，跟熟悉的朋友說話。酒喝到了稍微臉有點熱熱的程度，

但是還不打算結束，又追加了一兩道小菜比較安心，忽然開始沒頭沒腦地轉換成自己喜歡的話題，所以像「陳芳明的笑點很低」、「我喜歡打小孩」這樣的開頭也敢大刺刺地寫，接下去想到什麼就說什麼，不管對方跟不跟得上，有沒有興趣，是不是該回家了，心裡想是好朋友的原因，所以讓自己放肆一點，說得遠一點沒關係，人家多少會寬容對待，並不會暴怒痛打我一頓，頂多唸個兩句：「飯可以亂吃，話可不能亂說啊！」而且不管我最後寫得怎麼樣，文章的樣子有多麼奇怪，我總有個藉口可以說：「這是身為小說家的我，盡可能誠實地表達自我的結果。」