រឿងពពឹកភ្នែកក្រាស់

ភិក្ខុ យឿន សៅលី

Thick Eyes' Residue

By Venerable Yoeun Saolee

បច្ចុប្បន្ន ព្រះអង្គគង់នៅ ទីក្រុងភ្នំពេញ។ នៅឆ្នាំ២០០៦ ព្រះអង្គ បានទទួលចំណាត់ថ្នាក់លេខ៣ ពីសមាគមអក្សរសិល្បិ៍ ហាច ផ្នែករឿងខ្លី ដែលមានចំណងជើងថា៖ *ពពឹកភ្នែកក្រាស់*។

បង! ក្រោកឡើង១ ពិសាបបរទាន់នៅក្តៅ ទុកយូរត្រជាក់លែងឆ្ងាញ់ហើយ...

ពាក្យនេះឮដដែល១ រំខានដំណេករាល់១ព្រឹក១ ខ្ញុំជាមេគ្រួសារម្នាក់ដែរ បែរជាត្រូវប្រពន្ធដាស់តឿនដូចក្មេងទៅវិញ។ តែខ្ញុំចូលចិត្តស្តាប់ពាក្យទាំងនេះ កុំតែមានអ្នកចាំជួយដាស់តឿនរាល់ថ្ងៃដូច្នេះ ម្ល៉េះខ្ញុំរកត្រើយសុកមង្គលមិនឃើញទេ...

នឹកឃើញកាលនៅកំលោះ ម៉ែរំលឹកញយ១ ពីគូអនាគត ព្រោះគាត់ចង់ឲ្យខ្ញុំមានប្រពន្ធជាស្រីខ្មែរត្រឹមត្រូវ...

ខ្ញុំបានដឹងខ្លះ១ដែរ ពីប្រភេទមនុស្សស្រី។ ស្រី១បើរាប់ទៅមាន ស្រីនៅជនបទ និងទីក្រុង ស្រីជាងអ៊ុតសក់ ធ្វើក្រចក ក្នុងការ ស្រីឡង់សេ ម៉ាស្សា ខារ៉ាអូខេ ស្រីកម្មករកាត់ដេរ...។ល។ ខ្ញុំតាំងចិត្តថា មិនយកស្រីប្រភេទដែលបានរៀបរាប់នេះ មកធ្វើជាប្រពន្ធទេ ពិសេសពួកស្រីកាត់ដេរ...។

នឹករឿងអតីតកាល ពេលខ្លះគួរឲ្យអស់សំណើច និងមានវិប្បដិសារី។ វិប្បដិសារីដោយសារតែគ្រួសារក្រ មិនបានទៅរៀនសូត្រ មួយទៀតខំរកស៊ីបានប្រាក់ច្រើន តែមិនបានសន្សំសំចៃ ហើយធ្វើបាបស្រី១ ក៏មិនតិចនាក់ដែរ ឯរឿងគួរអស់សំណើចវិញ...

ពេលឈប់រៀន ខ្ញុំអស់សង្ឃឹមមែនទែន។ ថ្ងៃណាក៏ដើរលេង ស៊ីផឹក ស្រីញី ល្បែងស៊ីសង ខ្ញុំមិនខ្វល់អ្វីទាំងអស់។ ពេលខ្លះគាស់ទូ យកប្រាក់ផស់ម៉ែទៅចាយក៏មាន។ ខ្ញុំប្រែរូបទៅជាមនុស្សមួយថ្មី។ មិនគិតអ្វីទាំងអស់។ តែពេលខ្លះអាណិតម៉ែដែរ ដែលគាត់ខំចិញ្ចឹមខ្ញុំទាំងត្រដាបត្រដួស ធ្វើស្រែផង លក់នំបញ្ចុកផង។ ម៉ែធ្លាប់ប្រាប់ថា ពុកស្លាប់តាំងពីខ្ញុំនៅក្នុងពោះ បើសង្ឃឹមលើប្រាក់ខែខ្មោចពុក ខ្ញុំស្លាប់តាំងពីកើតមកម្ល៉េះ។

បើគិតតែពីរឿងក្រខ្ញុំមិនប្រឹងរក ធ្វើម៉េចមានបាន។ ហេងដែរ ដែលខ្ញុំហ៊ានជួញ... និងឈើមានតម្លៃ។ របរនេះ ប្រឈមមុខនឹងច្បាប់បន្តិច គ្រាន់តែគេឃាត់ខ្លួនបីដងហើយ កុំតែបានអាកយចេញមុខជានា ចប់បាត់ហើយខ្ញុំ។ ឪអាកយធំដុំដែរ អំណាចឪវា អាចនាំឲ្យខ្ញុំប្រមូលបានប្រាក់សន្ធឹក។ វាជាអ្នកប្រោសខ្ញុំឲ្យផុតពីភាពក្រីក្រ។

គតិបណ្ឌិតពិតពលោកមួយឃ្លាពោលថា មានប្រាក់មានអ្វីៗទាំងអស់។ ម៉ែឈប់ជេរខ្ញុំ បងៗមានមុខរបរគ្រប់គ្នា អ្នកមានក្នុងភូមិខ្វះឲ្យខ្ញុំខ្ចីប្រាក់ បបួលខ្ញុំឲ្យរកស៊ីជាមួយ...។ ទង្វើរបស់អ្នកទាំងនោះ ធ្វើឲ្យខ្ញុំកាន់តែក្លាហានឡើងៗ។ ចុងក្រោយ ខ្ញុំសម្រេចចិត្តទៅប្រឡូកនៅទីក្រុងជាមួយអាកយទៀត។

នៅភ្នំពេញមិនថាកន្លែងណាទេ ខ្ញុំស្គាល់ស្ទើរតែទាំងអស់។ បើនិយាយពីរឿងស្រីញីវិញ រឹតតែគ្មានន័យសម្រាប់ខ្ញុំទៅទៀត។ ខ្ញុំដូរបានតាមចិត្តចង់។ ស្រីសម័យនេះផង មិនបាច់ផ្គាប់ចិត្តម៉ែឪទេ ព្រោះនេះជាសម័យកុំព្យូទ័រ... ឲ្យតែមានប្រាក់ គឺចប់...។

ខ្ញុំមិនចង់បានប្រពន្ធទេ តែបើចង់បាននាងណាម្នាក់ មកកំដរឲ្យបាត់អផ្សុក ខ្ញុំចំណាយប្រាក់តិចតួចទិញណ្ហូគៀទំនើប ឬម៉ូតូមីអូមួយគ្រឿងឲ្យទៅ អូខេបាត់ហើយ...។ ក្មេងស្ទាវៗងាយណាស់។ ពិសេស ស្រីទើបមកពីស្រែមួយចំនួន ធាប់ឈ្ងក់ទឹកម៉ាស៊ីនមែនទែន។

កាលខ្ញុំនៅក្រ ខ្ញុំធ្លាប់រងការប្រមាថពីក្រមុំៗក្នុងភូមិដែរ។ កាលនោះ ខ្ញុំស្រឡាញ់នាងណាស់ រហូតដល់មិនហ៊ានប៉ះពាល់សូម្បីចុងដៃនាងផង ខ្ញុំគោរពប្រពៃណីយ៉ាងខ្ជាប់ខ្ជួន តែចិត្តស្មោះរបស់ខ្ញុំ ត្រូវនាងជាន់ឈ្លី ជៀលត្មេះខ្ញុំថា ខ្ញុំនេះល្ងង់ខ្លៅណាស់ ប្រុសដប់គត់អាដំឡូងមូល...។ល។ គិតរឿងទាំងនេះ គួរឲ្យអស់សំណើចណាស់។ តែអនុគ្រោះដល់នាងៗចុះ ព្រោះពួកនាងៗរៀបការអស់ហើយ។

ហ៊ឺ! ម៉ែបង្ខំអើយបង្ខំ រឿងប្រពន្ធកូន... តែខ្ញុំមិនដឹងថា យកប្រពន្ធជាស្រីបែបណាទេ បើសម័យនេះ នារីទីក្រុងមួយចំនួន ធ្វើអ្វីៗមិនឲ្យចាញ់ប្រុសៗសោះ គេបង្វិលចង្រ្កានជុំហើយ គេមិនចូលចង្ក្រានស្លស្លុកទេ មានកូនក៏មិនឲ្យបៅដែរ ខ្លាចខូចរាង ឯសំលៀកបំពាក់វិញអ៊ីរ៉ុបសុំខ្មាស។ ឥឡូវខ្ពើមមើល ចង់នាងសំយេះដល់ណា ខើចដល់ណាដល់ទៅ ខ្ញុំឆ្អែតឆ្អន់ហើយ។

ជីវិតផ្លាស់ប្តូររហូត ម្តងគេ ម្តងខ្ញុំ ជោគជ័យ បរាជ័យកើតទន្ទឹមគ្នា... អាកយមិត្តសម្លាញ់ខ្ញុំ ងាប់ដោយសារអេដស៍បាត់ហើយ។ នៅទីក្រុងពិបាករស់នៅណាស់ ប្រាក់ពិបាករកមែនទែន។ ជាប់គុកលើកនោះ អត់មានអ្នកជានាដូចមុនទៀត។ ខ្ញុំនឹកដល់ពាក្យម៉ែ ដែលតែងទូន្មានឲ្យខ្ញុំចេះសន្សំសំចៃ កុំប្រព្រឹត្តបរទុច្ចរិត...។ ខ្ញុំឃ្លាតពីស្រុក ពីម៉ែយូរដែរហើយ នៅក្នុងគុក ខ្ញុំនឹកគាត់ខ្លាំងណាស់ រហូតយល់សប្តិឃើញគាត់ទៀតផង។ ខ្ញុំផ្ញើសំបុត្រទៅម៉ែ...

ម៉ែពុំដែលស្គាល់ភ្នំពេញបែរមុខទៅណាទេ លុះបានទទួលសំបុត្រ ក៏ប្រវេប្រវាមករកខ្ញុំ។ គាត់លក់ស្រែ លក់គោខ្វះ យកប្រាក់លោះខ្ញុំចេញពីគុក។

ពេលចេញពីគុកគ្មានលុយចាយសោះ បក្សពួកក៏បាត់អស់ទៀត ខ្ញុំសម្រេចចិត្តទៅស្រុកវិញ...

...គ្រាន់តែមកដល់ផ្ទះភ្លាម បងៗរបស់ខ្ញុំករឿងដោយប្រការផ្សេងៗ ម្នាក់ម៉ាម៉ាត់ៗគ្រប់ៗគ្នា ខ្លះថា៖ អ្ហែងពេលមានបាន ចាយមិនចេះគិត ពេលនេះសមមុខហើយ ឬថា៖ អ្ហែងសមមុខហើយ ព្រោះប្រព្រឹត្តតែរឿងអាក្រក់ៗ អ្ហែងគួរកុំនៅស្រុកនេះអី ក្រែងគេមកសងសឹកដោយទាំងអញ... ផលអាក្រក់របស់ឯងមកដល់ហើយ អញជួយមិនបានទេ...

ម៉ែ! មានតែម៉ែម្នាក់គត់នៅស្រឡាញ់ខ្ញុំ... ម៉ែខ្ញុំចាស់ណាស់ ហើយឈឺទៀត គាត់និយាយមកខ្ញុំ៖ «កូនម្ដាយ! ម៉ែសប្បាយចិត្តណាស់ ដែលឃើញកូនត្រឡប់មកវិញ...»។ គាត់ប្រឹងទប់ទឹកភ្នែកមិនឲ្យធ្លាក់ ដៃរបស់គាត់ប្រឹងចាប់ខ្ញុំមិនឲ្យរបូតៗ នៅពេលឮសម្ដី និងឃើញអាការៈរបស់ម៉ែខ្ញុំ ធ្វើឲ្យខ្ញុំដឹងខ្លួនខ្លះៗ ខ្លួនខ្ញុំនេះអាក្រក់ណាស់ ខ្ញុំនឹកអាណិតម៉ែជាពន់ពេកៗ

មកដល់ស្រុកវិញ មុខរបរអ្វីក៏គ្មាន សូម្បីឡើងត្នោត ឬចិញ្ចឹមសត្វ ដែលជារបរអ្នកភូមិក៏ខ្ញុំធ្វើមិនបាន... គិតអ្វីក៏គិតមិនឃើញដែរៗ ខ្ញុំទ្រាំលេបថ្ម លេបគ្រួស ដេកស៊ីនឹងបងៗ និងមើលថែទាំម៉ែៗ

ម៉ែបានធូរស្បើយពីរោគាខ្លះ...ៗ គាត់បង្ខំខ្ញុំ ឲ្យយកប្រពន្ធៗ ខ្ញុំធ្លាប់មានកំហុសច្រើន ហើយពេលនេះអត់ការងារធ្វើទៀត ណាម៉ែចាស់ផង ក៏ព្រមតាមគាត់ៗ ឮតែខ្ញុំថាព្រមភ្លាម ស្រាប់តែឲ្យខ្ញុំភ្ជាប់ពាក្យភ្លែត ជាមួយចរិយាស្រីកាត់ដេរ មិនរួសរាយ ស៊ើកៗ ទុយមុយ ចូលសង្គមមិនចុះ រាងស្រែៗ យ៉ាប់ភ្នែកណាស់...ៗ នាងគ្មានអ្វីវិជ្ជមានសម្រាប់ខ្ញុំទេៗ ឯម៉ែខ្ញុំវិញម៉ែ្វៗពោលសរសើរពីនាងនោះមិនដាច់ពីមាត់សោះ៖

ចរិយាជាស្រីខ្មែរពិតៗល្អទាំងរូបសម្ផស្ស ល្អទាំងចរិយាសម្បត្តិ ចេះស្គាល់ចាស់ទុំ ចេះគិតគូរវែងឆ្ងាយ មានចិត្តតស៊ូអត់ធ្មត់ៗ មនុស្សដូចខ្ញុំ ទាល់តែប្រពន្ធអ៊ីចឹងទើបទប់ទល់បានៗ ម៉ែខ្ញុំបុរាណបន្តិចហើយ រើសកូនប្រសា ទាល់តែបែបនាងហ្នឹងទើបយកៗ ខ្ញុំកប់យោបល់...ៗ

ខ្ញុំជាមុនស្សខិលខូចក្រៅសង្គមក៏ពិតមែន តែប្រពន្ធ ខ្ញុំរើសបន្តិច...ៗ នៅទីក្រុងប៉ុន្មានឆ្នាំនេះ ស្រីៗខ្ញុំស្គាល់ពេកៗ ឯនាងចរិយាវិញ មិនមាត់មិនក ទុយមុយ តាមតែគេបញ្ជា ទៅណាក៏ទៅ! ហ៊ឺ... មិនដឹងជាចាញ់បោកប្រុសៗប៉ុន្មាននាក់ទេ... ទៅកាត់ដេរនៅភ្នំពេញផងៗ ស្រីបែបចរិយា កោតតែម៉ែខ្ញុំសរសើរនាងថាត្រឹមត្រូវ បរិសុទ្ធទាំងចិត្ត ទាំងកាយទៅកើត មិនដឹងថាភ្នែកគាត់យ៉ាងម៉េចទេ...ៗ

ពុទ្ធោ! មិនទាន់ស្គាល់គ្នាច្បាស់ផង ខ្ញុំត្រូវភ្ជាប់ពាក្យ ពាក់ចិញ្ចៀនមាសទឹកដប់ឲ្យនាង

ឯម៉ែញញឹមខ្ញឹប ហៅចរិយាថាកូនៗជាប់មាត់។

...ថ្ងៃចូលឆ្នាំខ្មែរមកដល់ គូដណ្តឹងខ្ញុំមកលេងស្រុកកំណើត ដោយមានអីវ៉ែអីវ៉ាន់ច្រើនណាស់ជូនម៉ែខ្ញុំ និងចាស់ៗក្នុងភូមិ។ តាមមើល ប្រហែលជានាងស្រឡាញ់ខ្ញុំខ្លាំងហើយ បានជាតាមយកចិត្តម៉ែម្ល៉េះ។

ពេលល្ងាច ម៉ែឲ្យខ្ញុំបណ្តើរនាងទៅវត្ត ដើម្បីឲ្យព្រះសង្ឃប្រោះព្រំលើករាសី និងលេងល្បែងប្រជាប្រិយខ្មែរ។ ខ្ញុំឃើញចរិយាតែងខ្លួនស្រែៗ យ៉ាងម៉េចមិនដឹងទេ! យ៉ាប់ចិត្តមែនទែន។ ប៉ុន្តែពួកកំលោះៗមិនថាអ្នកផ្សារ ឬអ្នកស្រែទេ ពេលលេងឈូង បោះអង្គុញ លេងអីក៏ដោយ ពួកគេព្យាយាមចាប់តែចរិយាម្នាក់គត់។ ដល់ពេលឃើញគេចោមរោមចាប់នាង តែម្នាក់ដូច្នោះ ខ្ញុំចង់តែទៅដាក់អាប្រុសៗអស់នោះ ឲ្យណាណីម្តង តែទប់ចិត្តទាន់។

ទ្រាំមិនបាន ខ្ញុំក៏នាំនាងត្រឡប់មកផ្ទះវិញ។ យើងដើរតាមផ្លូវតែពីរនាក់... នាងមិននិយាយអ្វីសោះជាមួយខ្ញុំ ប្រហែលជានៅខឹង នឹងខ្សែក្អែកប្រចណ្ឌរបស់ខ្ញុំ។ ឃើញឱកាសហុចឲ្យ ខ្ញុំលូកដៃឱបនាងពីក្រោយ តែនាងរលាស់ខ្លួនផុត អ្វីដែលខ្ញុំទទួលបានក្នុងពេលនោះ គឺបាតដៃមួយកំផ្លៀងជាមួយពាក្យពីរបីម៉ាត់ៈ

នែ៎! បងធ្វើអីច្ឆតៗហ្នឹង បងចាត់ទុកខ្ញុំជាអ្វី?

ខ្ញុំតបទៅនាងវិញដោយលួងលោមថាៈ

មុន និងក្រោយ យើងគង់តែរៀបការនឹងគ្នាទេ ហេតុអ្វីគ្រាន់តែឱបប៉ុណ្ណឹងមិនបាន? បងមានសិទ្ធិណា៎! ព្រោះបងជាគូដណ្តឹងរបស់អូន។

ឱ! បងនៅស្គាល់ខ្ញុំជាគូដណ្តឹងដែរឬ? ខ្ញុំស្មានតែពាក្យនេះ រលុបបាត់ពីខួរក្បាលបងទៅហើយ? ខ្ញុំប្រាប់ឲ្យដឹង! សម្រាប់ខ្ញុំ ពាក្យថាគូដណ្តឹង មិនមែនធ្វើអ្វីបានតាមចិត្តទេ។

ឮពាក្យនោះភ្លាម ខ្ញុំមួម៉ៅខ្លាំងណាស់។ វាជាលើកទីមួយហើយ ដែលស្រីម៉ក់ៗស្តីឲ្យខ្ញុំមិនគួរមានរឿងអ៊ីចឹងសោះ ខ្ញុំតបវិញៈ

មិនបាច់ធ្វើគ្រាន់ទេ ពេលនេះទោះបីជាអូនចង់ស្រែក ចង់រត់ ឬមានស្លាបហើរ ក៏ហើរមិនរួចដែរ គ្មានអ្នកណាអាចជួយអូនបានទេ...!

គូដណ្តឹងខ្ញុំមិនបញ្ចេញប្រតិកម្មអ្វីឡើយ ក្រៅពីខ្សឹកខ្សួល។ បានឱកាស ខ្ញុំក៏ស្ទុះទៅចាប់នាងថើបខ្សឹតៗ។ រំពេចនោះ នាងពោលមកកាន់ខ្ញុំយ៉ាងច្បាស់ៗ និងដោយម៉ឺងម៉ាត់ថាៈ

ស្តាយណាស់ ដែលប្រុសដូចបងនេះ មើលឃើញអ្វីៗត្រឹមតែក្អែកប៉ុណ្ណោះ... ស្រីដូចខ្ញុំគ្មានលទ្ធភាពអ្វីតស៊ូជាមួយបងទេ ពេលនេះខ្ញុំនៅក្នុងកណ្តាប់ដៃបុរសឥតវិចារណញ្ញាណ

ដូចបងហើយ... តែខ្ញុំសូមប្រាប់បងថា បើហ៊ានធ្វើអ្វីផ្ដេសផ្ដាស ខ្ញុំនឹងស្អប់បងអស់មួយជីវិត ហើយកុំសង្ឃឹមថា ខ្ញុំរៀបការជាមួយបងឲ្យសោះ។

បានឮពាក្យទាំងនោះ ខ្ញុំសប្បាយចិត្តខ្លាំងណាស់ ហើយក៏មានចិត្តអាណិតនាងណាស់ដែរ។ យើងទៅផ្ទះរៀងៗខ្លួន...។ យប់នោះ ខ្ញុំរៀនបានមេរៀនមួយដ៏ល្អគឺ ខ្មាសខ្លួនឯងខ្លាំងណាស់។ យ៉ាងណាក៏ដោយ ខ្ញុំសង្ឃឹមថា នាងនឹងចាកចេញពីខ្ញុំ។ សូមឲ្យទៅជាអ៊ីចឹងទៅ។

ភ្លៀងដើមឆ្នាំបង្អុរមក... ផ្ទេកបន្ទោរចាំងស្ទើរខ្វាក់ភ្នែក។ ចាស់ៗផ្ដើមជំនុំគ្នាពីរឿងក្ដួរពាស់។ ឯម៉ែខ្ញុំវិញគិតរាប់ដៃ រាប់ជើង ច កុរ ជូត ឆ្លូវ... រកវេលារៀបការឲ្យខ្ញុំ និងចរិយា ស្រីកម្មករកាត់ដេរ។

ខ្ញុំគិតដល់នាងកាលណា គុណវិបត្តិជាច្រើនរបស់នាង បានលេចឡើងក្នុងក្បាលខ្ញុំ ធ្វើឲ្យខ្ញុំស្អប់នាងលើសដើម។ ខ្ញុំគិតថា នឹងប្រាប់ម្ដាយខ្ញុំ ឲ្យជូនពាក្យទៅគ្រួសារនាងវិញ ហើយសង់ថ្ងៃខាន់ស្លាឲ្យនាងទៅគឺចប់រឿងហើយ។ តែបើគាត់មិនយល់ព្រមទេ ខ្ញុំនឹងរកល្បិចផ្សេងទៀត ធ្វើឲ្យនាងឈឺចាប់ ឆ្អែតចិត្តនឹងខ្ញុំ ឲ្យនាងចាកចេញពីជីវិតខ្ញុំ នោះខ្ញុំនឹងមានសេរីភាពឡើងវិញ។

ខ្ញុំយករឿងនោះ ទៅប្រាប់ម្ដាយខ្ញុំភ្លាមដែរ... តែម៉ែឆ្លើយថា៖

ចាស់ទុំគិតគូររកថ្ងៃល្អអស់ហើយ ហើយបងៗឯងក៏ហៅភ្ញៀវខ្លះហើយដែរ។ កូនគួរតែធ្វើជាកូនកតញ្ញូ ដើម្បីម៉ែបានទេ? បើកូនធ្វើបែបនេះ...

ខ្ញុំប្រញាប់តបទៅគាត់វិញ៖ បានៗ ម៉ែចាត់ចែងចុះ...!

ថ្ងៃមង្គលការបានមកដល់ ជាថ្ងៃដែលមនុស្សគ្រប់រូបប្រាថ្នាចង់បាន តែជាថ្ងៃដែលខ្ញុំសោកសៅបំផុត ឯចាស់ទុំ ម្ដាយឪពុកទាំងសងខាង ញញឹមបិទមាត់មិនជិត។ អ្នកខ្លះចំអន់ខ្ញុំថា សមគ្នាអើយសែនសម ខ្លះថា កោតតែចរិយាយកខ្ញុំដែរ...

ពេលក្រាបសំពះផ្ទឹម ចរិយាខំញញឹមបញ្ចេញសម្រស់គ្រប់បែបយ៉ាង តាមពាក្យបញ្ចោររបស់មិត្តនាង និងជាងថត។ ភ្ញៀវទាំងឡាយអបអរខ្ញុំស្ទើរតែស្រវឹង។ ពិធីមង្គលការមានភាពគគ្រឹកគគ្រេងអស្ចារ្យ មានកាត់នំនេកបញ្ចុកគ្នា ថើបគ្នា ខាំនំ... អូយ! ទម្រាំចប់ពិធី ខ្ញុំហេវហត់មែនទែន។

រាត្រីនោះ ចរិយាទឹកមុខនាងស្ងេកស្ងាំង។ នាងសម្លឹងមើលមកខ្ញុំ តែខ្ញុំវិញ មើលទៅព្រះចន្ទតាមបង្អួចធ្វើហី។ ចាស់ទុំសម្រាន្តនៅខាងក្រោយបន្ទប់លង់លក់អស់ហើយ។ ឃើញខ្ញុំសោះអង្គើយ នាងសួរ៖

បង! យប់ជ្រៅហើយល្មមសម្រាកទៅ! ប្រយ័ត្នអត់ងងុយទៅជាឈឺ...

ខ្ញុំមិនតបទេ ទោះបីជានាងព្រួយបារម្ភពីខ្ញុំក៏ដោយ។ ឃើញបែបនោះនាងបន្ថែមទៀតៈ

បង! បងមានរឿងអ្វីកប់ក្នុងចិត្តមែនទេ បានជាស្ងៀមស្ងាត់បែបនេះ? រឿងអ្វីក៏ដោយមិនថាធំប៉ុណ្ណាទេ ឲ្យតែយើងរួមគំនិតគ្នាដោះស្រាយ នោះពិតជាអាចដោះស្រាយបានជាមិនខាន...!

ខ្ញុំគិតក្នុងចិត្ត។ យីនាងនេះ! និយាយមើលតែខ្លួនឯងអស្ចារ្យណាស់អ៊ីចឹង ស្មានតែខ្ញុំចាត់ទុកនាង ក្នុងកែវភ្នែកខ្ញុំហើយមើលទៅ...! តែខ្ញុំព្យាយាមនិយាយល្អជាមួយនាងថាៈ

បងអត់មានរឿងអីទេ...! តែបងអរពេក ពេលដែលបានរូបអូនមកធ្វើជាប្រពន្ធ ហេតុតែបងស្រឡាញ់ នឹកអាណិតអូនខ្លាំងពេក បងកំពុងគិតថា បងមិនដឹងធ្វើអ្វីដើម្បីផ្គាប់ចិត្តអូន និងឲ្យសមជាប្ដីល្អ... ណ្ហើយ...! អូនចូលគេងមុនចុះ។

ឮខ្ញុំនិយាយសម្ដីបោកប្រាសដូច្នេះ ចិត្តនាងប្រហែលប្រែជាត្រជាក់ នាងញញឹមតបមកខ្ញុំ ស្នាមញញឹមនាងស្រស់ស្អាតណាស់។

តាំងពីចាប់ដៃគ្នាមក ខ្ញុំឃើញចរិយាធ្វើសព្វបែប តាំងពីបោកគក់ ដាំស្ល បោសជូត... ដូចម្ដាយខ្ញុំថាមែន សូម្បីបងៗ ក៏សរសើរនាងមិនដាច់ពីមាត់ដែរ។ តែក្នុងចិត្តខ្ញុំ នាងធ្វើដើម្បីផ្គាប់ចិត្តម្ដាយខ្ញុំតែប៉ុណ្ណោះ។ បងៗអស់ពីសរសើរចរិយា បែរជាបន្ទោសខ្ញុំៈ

កោតអ្ហែងដែរ ដេកស៊ីដោយសារស្រីមិនចេះខ្មាសគេ។ ល្អដូចចរិយាហើយ នៅអ្ហែងថាមិនកើតទៀត អាមោឃ! អ្ហែងទៅរកប្រពន្ធឯណាបានប្រហែលនាង?

ខ្ញុំមិនតបទេ ព្រោះពួកគាត់មិនយល់ពីខ្ញុំ។

ពេលមួយ ម៉ែខ្ញុំចំអន់ទៅកូនប្រសាៈ

កូន! ម៉េចបួនប្រាំខែហើយ ដូចជាមិនឃើញចង់ម្ជូរ ចង់អីសោះអ៊ីចឹង?

ខ្ញុំនៅក្បែរនោះដែរ ក៏ស៊កចំអន់ភ្លាមៈ

ចង់ម្ជូរអីកើត បើខ្ញុំធ្លាក់ពីលើគ្រែស្ទើរតែរាល់យប់...

ចរិយាដែលកំពុងតែបោសជូតផ្ទះ ក៏ឆ្លៀតតបៈ

ម៉ែ! ខ្ញុំគ្មានចេតនាទេ តែបងសម័យគាត់...

កូន! យើងជាស្រី មានប្ដីត្រូវចេះអត់ធ្មត់ អធ្យាស្រ័យ បើប្ដីខឹងយើងខំអត់។ យើងជាស្រីណា៎ កុំប្រើកម្លាំងកំហែងអី មិនល្អទេ រកឱកាសនិយាយគ្នា ដោះស្រាយបញ្ហាទៅ នោះសុភមង្គលពិតជាមាន ហើយកូនចៅ ក៏កាន់តែមានច្រើនដែរ(ម៉ែនិយាយកាត់)។

អរគុណហើយម៉ែ! បានទូន្មានខ្ញុំ(នាងនិយាយដោយភ្នែកដៀងមកខ្ញុំ)។

ម៉ែខ្ញុំស្រឡាញ់ខ្ញុំ គាត់មិនស្តីបន្ទោសខ្ញុំទេ។ អយុត្តិធម៌សម្រាប់ចរិយាមែន តែធ្វើឲ្យខ្ញុំសប្បាយចិត្ត។

ខែរះពេញបូណ៌មី ជះរស្មីភ្លឺចិញ្ចាចនៅក្រៅផ្ទះ។ យប់នោះ ខ្ញុំឃើញចរិយានាងស្អាតណាស់ មើលពេលណា ក៏រំលេចរូបឆោមដែរ។ នាងជានារីដ៏សោភាម្នាក់ផ្សេងពីមុន។ ខ្ញុំប្រមៀលខ្លួនតិចៗ លបៗ ក្រសោបឱបនាងយ៉ាងណែនក្នុងដៃ បន្ទាប់មក... យប់នោះនាងក្លាយជាប្រពន្ធពេញលេញរបស់ខ្ញុំ ខ្ញុំមានអារម្មណ៍រំភើបណាស់ តែដោយចង់ឈ្នះចិត្តនាង ខ្ញុំនិយាយបញ្ឈឺះ

ខ្ញុំធ្វើបែបនេះ កុំស្មានថា ខ្ញុំចាត់ទុកនាងជាប្រពន្ធខ្ញុំឲ្យសោះ ខ្ញុំគ្រាន់តែចង់ឲ្យនាងឈឺចាប់ និងឆាប់ចាកចេញពីជីវិតខ្ញុំប៉ុណ្ណោះ... គ្មានតម្លៃអីបន្តិចទេ អ្វីដែលនាងខំធ្វើកន្លងមក ខ្ញុំមើលមិនចូលភ្នែកសោះ...។ ចរិយាទឹកភ្នែករលីងរលោង... មិនចេញស្តីសូម្បីម៉ាម៉ាត់។

ព្រឹកឡើង ខ្ញុំអស់កម្លាំងមែនទែន។ ក្រោកឡើងមិនឃើញប្រពន្ធខ្ញុំសោះ។ ខ្ញុំហៅនាង តែនាងមិនឆ្លើយ រកនាងក៏មិនឃើញ។ ខ្ញុំបារម្ភ។ នឹកដល់រឿងរ៉ាវកាលពីយប់ មិនគួរព្រោះតែចិត្តមានៈ ចង់ឈ្នះចាញ់ ខ្ញុំប្រើពាក្យមិនគប្បីចំពោះនាង។ ខ្ញុំមានអារម្មណ៍ហោលហាលណាស់ ពេលនោះទើបខ្ញុំយល់ពីតម្លៃជាមនុស្ស ជាស្រីខ្មែរដូចនាង។ នាងជាប្រពន្ធដ៏ល្អ ធ្វើអ្វីៗគ្រប់យ៉ាងដើម្បីខ្ញុំ ម៉ែខ្ញុំក៏ធ្វើអ្វីៗទាំងអស់ដើម្បីខ្ញុំ មានតែខ្ញុំម្នាក់គត់ ដែលមិនយល់ពីសន្តានចិត្តនេះ។ ខ្ញុំចង់សុំអភ័យទោសចរិយា និងសុំទោសចំពោះម៉ែ។ ខ្ញុំថប់ចិត្តណាស់ដែលមិនបាននិយាយពាក្យទាំងនោះភ្លាមៗ។

អើ សម័យ...!(ម៉ែខ្ញុំហៅ)

បាទម៉ែ!(ខ្ញុំឆ្លើយទាំងអល់អែកក្នុងទ្រូង ហើយសួររកប្រពន្ធរបស់ខ្ញុំ) ម៉ែប្រពន្ធខ្ញុំទៅណាហើយ?

ហ៊ឺ...!(ម៉ែដកដង្ហើមធំសម្លក់សម្លឹងមកខ្ញុំដោយខ្នាន់ខ្នាញ់ រួចនិយាយ) ចរិយាសុំម៉ែទៅផ្ទះតាំងពីព្រលឹមម៉្លេះ... ហើយកូនឯងយ៉ាងម៉េច...! បានជាបង្ករឿងមិនឈប់ឈរសោះអ៊ីចឹង។

ចុះម៉ែម៉េចមិនឃាត់នាងផង...?

ម៉ែឃាត់រាប់សិបដងហើយ តែម្តងនេះ ម៉ែឈប់ឃាត់ទៀតហើយ ធ្វើម៉េចបើកូនមិនស្រឡាញ់នាង ឲ្យនាងទៅចុះ ម៉ែពិបាកភ្នែកណាស់រាល់ថ្ងៃ។ ម៉ែក៏សុំទោសកូនឯងដែរ ដែលបង្ខំឲ្យកូនរៀបការជាមួយចរិយា។

ដូចខ្ញុំស្មានមែន នាងទៅផ្ទះនាងវិញហើយ...។ ខ្ញុំតបទៅម៉ែវិញ៖

អ្នកណាថាខ្ញុំមិនស្រឡាញ់នាង? ម៉ែ! ពេលនេះទើបខ្ញុំដឹងថា នាងសំខាន់សម្រាប់ជីវិតខ្ញុំ។ ខ្ញុំសុំទោសម៉ែ ដែលកន្លងមកខ្ញុំធ្វើឲ្យរំខានចិត្តម៉ែ។

កូនម៉ែ! ម៉ែអភ័យទោសឲ្យឯងរាល់លើក។ កូន! ជាកូនដែលម៉ែអាណិត ស្រឡាញ់ជាងគេ ព្រោះឯងកើតមកមិនបានឃើញមុខឪពុក។ តែលើកនេះ ម៉ែអស់សមត្ថភាពហើយ កូនធំហើយ ម៉ែទុកដាក់ឲ្យមានប្រពន្ធហើយដែរ គឺម៉ែបានបំពេញភារៈ ជាម្ដាយសព្វគ្រប់ហើយ បើកូនចង់ឲ្យប្រពន្ធឯងមកវិញ ទៅតាមខ្លួនឯងចុះ...៕

The Revolver

By Phin Santel

Author's Note

The original story was written in Khmer over a year ago. It was limited to twenty-five pages and I was advised not to write about the subject of love. It was also the first time I had written a story so I wasn't really sure what to write about. I wrote a story longer than twenty-five pages so the one I sent to the Nou Hach Literary Competition was a shorter version. It actually won the second-place prize for short fiction, making me a little nervous.

"The Revolver" comes closer than the original story to what I have been facing from the first day that I started to write about my country. It's more about me and my difficulties than the real story itself. The real story is about a countryside woman, her rice field, a pump machine and a revolver.

Forget about me ...follow the woman's steps. I hope that you will like her as much as I do.

The Revolver

The fact that you came back to Cambodia didn't surprise anybody much. They already knew, since you decided to begin your studies of Khmer literature in Paris, that one day for sure you would return to Cambodia.

You asked your parents since you are not able to help them in the restaurant anymore. However Smey and Deth, your youngest sister and brother, promised that they would replace you.

Except Caroline, you didn't know how you could say goodbye to her. Having gone through all these years, you could not imagine how much you would be lost without her.

"Are you leaving now?" she asked in front of the boarding gate at Charles De Gaulle Airport.

"Yes," you answered spontaneously.

"Without me?" she asked.

"Because she cannot go!" you said.

"How do you know I cannot go? You didn't ask me yet?" she insisted.

"Because I know the answer," you replied.

Don't cry, Caroline. You already cried once when you were born. You are not going to cry again and again for your whole life. You might cry again when you die but not this time. At least not in front of me...

"Write to me when you arrive in Cambodia?" she asked after releasing you from her arms.

"I think it is better if we forget each other," you told her instead of answering her question.

“Do you think so?”

“Yes.”

You turn your back and leave. You let her cry in your mother's arms.

It was not true. You would never forgot her. How could you forget someone you'd made love to a thousand times? But Paris was too cold. It was difficult to live alone. She would have a lot of chances to find someone else. It was sad to live with the promises. With the time, the promises could be forgotten and betrayed. Time passes, nothing remains the same. Eternity is nothing but a lie. We should not believe in eternity. Sometimes saying goodbye to someone doesn't always mean goodbye. Caroline would understand about all this one day.

You were very curious to know the true Cambodia. You had been watching Cambodia from far away, in every detail through all its history and literature. You believed that it was not enough to know a country from reading the newspapers or listening to the radio or watching television. There were a lot of things remaining hidden. It was for this reason that you left Paris.

You had already informed Vincent who was currently in Cambodia. Vincent was an old friend of yours. Your parents could escape to France in 1975 because of the help from Monsieur Nicolae, Vincent's father. Monsieur Nicolae and your father had worked together in the French Embassy before the war began. The two families had remained close to each other since then.

Vincent picked you up at the airport as you wished. You were very exhausted, due to fifteen hours on the plane and six hours of time difference between Paris and Phnom Penh. Vincent brought you to his own apartment on Sisowath Quay.

You woke up late the next morning. Suddenly you felt the heat of the sun. It was something you had been dreaming about for the last twenty years. You hurried to get out of bed. You stepped out on the balcony to bask in the sunshine. You could not express how excited you were to be back again in your home country.

Vincent had been in Cambodia for four years. His mission for the French Embassy was finished, but he didn't want to return to France. He, after all, had fallen in love with a Cambodian woman. This did not surprise you because you knew your friend very well. Vincent had a great deal of knowledge about Khmer culture. He, at the moment, worked at the French Cultural Center in Phnom Penh.

They got married three months later, after your arrival in Cambodia. They celebrated with a traditional Khmer wedding. Thida, his wife, is very beautiful. She has dark shiny skin. She looks like a little girl but not quite as small. You found her very cute. The two of them seemed made for each other. Your parents and Vincent's parents flew a long way from Paris to Phnom Penh to join their wedding. Your father wanted to introduce you to some good daughters of his old friends. But you told him you were just twenty-five years old and that you were too young to get married. You wanted to remain like a wild man for some more time.

A few days after the wedding, Vincent and Thida went to Europe for their honeymoon. They let you live alone in their apartment on Sisowath Quay. Your parents also went back to France

because they were concerned about their restaurant. You had to live alone with your solitude. It is said that solitude is good for a writer. He can imagine so many things from his solitude. But for you nothing went well. For three months you had stayed in this city; still you didn't have anything to write about seriously.

You had dreamt of being able to write a love story about Cambodia. You had been ashamed when you searched in all the libraries around the world and could only find books of genocide, of blood, and of survival. You wanted the world to find a new book about Cambodia. It was for this reason that you came here. You came to this country to write a book.

"What kind of book are you writing?" asked a woman one day.

"A love story," you replied.

"A love story? What kind of love story? Do you think that love exists in this country?"

"Yes, love does exist in the heart of every human being. Wherever there is a human being, there is a heart. And when there is a heart, there is love. Is this not enough to make you believe that there is also love in Cambodia?" You asked her back.

"Can I read your story?"

"I haven't written it yet. I don't know what kind of love story to write about..."

What kind of love story can you write about? Every day, for three months, you only found the records of accidents and the police reports about murders and crimes. The country was still suffering from her poverty. People needed to survive. They didn't have time to think about love or any other emotional activities. There were only some teenagers and some people who could close their eyes and continue to ignore all the events occurring in society.

It was said that you could get what you want coming to Cambodia. You could make love with all kinds of women. You could invite the beer girls or Karaoke girls for a "night soup," a secret code of invitation if you didn't dare to ask her directly. You could also have a waitress from a restaurant in your bed if you had contacts. You could even ask a high school student or a seller in the market to go to your room if you had contacts. You could also have a singer or movie star illuminate your night if you had contacts. It depended on how much you had in your pocket. This country was mad about money.

You tried to escape and move yourself away from all those things. It was hard, after all, to imagine something else. The surrounding environment made you feel completely lost. When you got lost, only women could tell you who you were and what to do. Women were the mothers of everything. A woman could give you thousands of reasons to live, especially when she moves her hands and caresses your hair. A woman could make you feel your existence and make you mad. You didn't wait for the big thing from her. You just waited until she put her finger in her mouth. It was very simple. Without women, you were hopeless. You were zero. You found nothing to write about this country; but from women's naked bodies, you found thousands of mysteries to discover. At least you could find a story from every woman that you made love with.

You began to present yourself frequently at the bar downtown, especially at the Heart of Darkness, a very small pleasant bar at the corner of Pasteur street.

"Would you like to buy me a drink?" a young, lovely woman asked.

"Sorry? What did you just say?" you asked in surprise.

You didn't believe what you had just heard. It was rare to hear a real Cambodian woman asking a guy to buy her a drink. She didn't even look like any of the prostitutes that you knew here.

"Buy me a drink!" she repeated.

"OK." You ordered a Whisky for her.

"Is it your place?"

"Hmm... Not really... but it could be your place if you would like to sit down."

"Oh, I see, would you like to dance?"

"With you?"

"Yes with me, would you like to dance with me?"

How could you refuse a pretty woman's request? She came from nowhere and appeared in front of you like an angel. She treated you like someone she had known for a hundred years. You felt very passionate about making love to her. She was like a starving wild animal without food for three months.

However, there was something she didn't tell you. She didn't tell you that she was the mistress of a Taiwanese gangster. She didn't tell you that she went out at night to get vengeance on her man. It was because he had abandoned her for one week to visit his wife in China. She was sad and had an emergency need. You never thought that she would be able to put you in danger. It was as people say: women are dangerous. The most beautiful woman was the most dangerous.

It started from there, in the Heart Darkness, that you got to know Sam. He let you live. If it had not been him, probably, you would have been killed without being able to say a word. It was not good to deceive the woman who belonged to someone else. A woman, whether here or there, could not be shared. If you wanted to try, you would be killed without being able to say a word.

It is the night when the gangster came back to see his mistress. This woman, she did not love you at all, or at least she was not willing to protect you. She left with her master without telling you a word. You never believed that this woman could leave you without saying a word. Sam received his boss's order to eliminate you from this world. He brought you to a place far from the city. He waited for the right moment to shoot you with his revolver. You already believed that you were going to die without being able to say a word. But we die only once; why not resist, at least with words before then?

"I cannot die!!!" you shouted with all your strength.

"Why? Why can't you die? You are playing around with someone else's woman. You must die. Isn't it justifiable, no?" Sam asked you with a smile.

"It's because I haven't done what I want to do yet."

"What do you want to do, precisely?"

"To write a story!!!"

"What kind of story do you think you can write about this country?" he asked you.

"A love story."

"Love story? What kind of a love story? Do you think that love exists in this country? Do you believe that deceiving someone else's woman is a love story? Is that what you think?"

"No, no... It was a mistake. I made a mistake. It is true that I am going to die. To die today or tomorrow, it is nothing important. But before I die, I want to at least finish one story."

"Do you believe indeed that you can finish one?"

"I've already got some ideas."

"When can I read it?"

"If you kill me now, how can I write it?"

You didn't know if Sam could wait to read your love story. You didn't know if one day you would finish your story or if you would never be able to finish it. The important thing was that he didn't kill you. He let you live. This good man later became a very sincere friend. He had worked for the Taiwanese gangster for a few months. You asked him why he chose this job. He told you that he didn't have a choice. He had a lot of debts to pay after having lost so many soccer bets. The boss lent him a sum of money to pay them off.

It was also for this reason that his wife Sim came to look for him. He hadn't sent money, nor sent any news back home for the past three months. His wife was worried about him. Sam and Sim grew up together in the same family. Sam was an orphan. His parents were killed during the Khmer Rouge regime. Sim's family found Sam on the street while they were returning to the village after 1979. Sam had lived with Sim's family since then.

Sam could do everything an ordinary man could usually do. He was a serious man. It was because of his qualities that Sim's family married him to their daughter when he reached twenty. Sim, with the arrangement from her parents and also with her will, got married so young. She was only eighteen years old. She didn't know anything about love. She didn't know what she should do after the marriage. Sam could not get close to Sim for the first three months. Sam fell from the bed every night after trying to get close to his wife. You didn't know how Sam could make love with his wife. You didn't know what he did so that Sim finally agreed to make love with him. You heard they said it could happen to some of the rural women. It was because they didn't know anything about love.

Sim knew how to grow rice. She knew how to raise cows. She knew how to clean the house. She knew how to cook. Moreover she was a good cook. She would wake up early in the morning at four a.m. to cook. She knew how to make other things. But there were some things that she didn't know. She didn't know why she was sad since her husband left her to work in the city. She didn't know why she was sad when her husband didn't return home. She didn't realize that she was sad.

"Do you love him at least, your husband?"

"I don't know... I don't know what to say. I don't know about love... I don't know how to speak... how to love..."

“But why did you come to look for him?”

“I worry about him.”

“So then, that means you think about him a little I imagine?”

“Yes, I think about him all the time, all night long. I want him to come back home. I want him close to me to help grow rice, to raise cows and to do other work.”

“But it doesn't have anything to do with your wanting to kiss him, for example? Rather to reassure yourself that he still loves you? Or to tell you that in words of love?”

“I don't know about all those things. He never spoke to me the words of love. Me either, I don't know how to say big things. I don't know...”

“I see that you love him a lot, this man. I can see it in you, this love. Why can’t you feel anything? It exists in you, I am sure about it.”

“I don't know. I want him to be back home with me. And a pump machine is also necessary to pump the water.”

“Why is a pump machine necessary?”

“It’s because the rain doesn't fall anymore from the sky. There is not enough water in the rice field. A machine is necessary to pump the water. Otherwise, the rice will die.”

Sam left the house because the rice field didn’t yield enough rice to support his family. He started working in the city two years ago, in a car garage. He sent all the money that he earned to his wife every month. He was a great man. It was his mistake to bet on soccer matches. You believed that he did it to come home with a little money in his pocket. He didn't know that the game was only a bad choice for loosing all his money.

There were a lot of people in this country and others who were obsessed with the games. It was because they were poor and would like to have a little more money.

Sam left his wife with you without telling you what and where he was going. You only knew that he had a very important task to finish tonight. He said that it would be the last job, his last payback for his boss. If he were successful, he would be returning to the countryside with his wife.

After her husband left, Sim could not remain calm. Her concern became more and more intense. She was afraid that something unfortunate would happen to her husband. She walked from right to left, from left to right. She descended and ascended the stairs many times.

She came to you and always asked the same questions: “Where is he now? Why until this time, hasn’t he come back yet?”

You didn't know how to help this woman. You didn’t wish to see her cry either. Suddenly you thought of a place where you hoped she would be able to calm down. You brought her to Dangkal monastery, a place where people usually prayed for good things and blessings to happen to the people they loved.

So did Sim. She prayed for Sam. It was said that the Dangkal god is a good lord. Whatever the people asked for, it would come true because of the power of the Dangkal god. You didn't believe in god, but when you saw Sim pray, you also prayed for her. You hoped that Sam would return safely and in good health. Then he would take his wife back to the countryside.

After finishing the prayer, you took her to the old market to buy groceries for cooking. You didn't know what to do to make her happy. You thought that cooking would reduce her concern for her husband. In the kitchen, you tried asking her many things to keep her occupied. You found out that this woman didn't know at all how to speak her mind. She was very shy. Every time you asked her a question, her face turned red. She was very shy when speaking about love. You found out a lot of funny things, especially when she told you that she pushed her husband off the bed every night when he wanted to touch her. Due to this conversation you could learn a lot about their youth.

But you could not fool her for long with conversation...

After the meal, she was doing nothing but walking around, going to see the people down along Sisowath Quay. Multiple times she went up and down the stairs looking for Sam. Her husband was not yet back. You drove her in the car Vincent left for you. You toured around the city to make her calm down a little. She was looking for her husband on every street. She didn't get bored looking at every corner, looking for her husband. She didn't stop even one minute to take a rest. You could see it in her eyes, the deep worry she had for her husband. You brought her to the Heart of Darkness, the place where you met Sam for the very first time. But he was not there.

Where was he?

It was a question that you could not answer. At two o'clock in the morning you finally managed to get Sim back home. She was tired, but she didn't want to go to bed. She was sleeping in the front room while waiting to open the door for her husband. You didn't want to sleep either. You wanted to write something about this woman. She touched you a lot, with her silence, her unspeakable feelings that she didn't know how to express. She kept everything inside. If you were her, at least you would be able to say something. But she didn’t know how to speak.

But what could we speak about, love?

Hours have passed; you have found no words either. Could this woman's feelings be expressed in words? Did we have some words to speak that would relieve her concern?

It was too hard, you found, for her to keep everything suppressed. You kept looking for the right words until someone knocked on the door. Sim woke up and went before you to open the door. It was Sam, finally. There he was, smiling at the door. Thank god he was still alive. Moreover he was grinning. His smile was enough to let you assume that he had successfully completed his task. Sim hugged her husband tightly.

She told Sam repeatedly: “Don't leave me alone anymore... don't leave me alone anymore.”

Sam wanted to leave immediately, to take a taxi and head back to the countryside. You told him to wait for a second. Then, you went in your room to get some money. You gave him 200 dollars. He refused at first. You knew that he was going to refuse, so you told him that you were going to write a story about his wife. It was the price you would pay for her as the source of information. You believed that 200 dollars would be enough to buy the machine to

pump water into the rice field. In return Sam gave you his revolver. You didn't want to accept; but if you refused, he would not accept your money.

"What kind of story are you writing about me?" Sim asked you before leaving.

"A love story."

"A love story? What kind of love story? Do you think that you can write a love story about me?"

"Yes, love does exist in the heart of every human being. Wherever there is a human being, there is a heart. And when there is a heart, there is love. Is this not enough to make you believe that there is also love in you?"

"Can I read your story?"

"I wrote it yesterday. I must reread it and correct some mistakes. I am going to bring it with me when I visit you in the countryside."

"Don't forget then to bring it with you. I want to read...," Sim very sincerely asked you.

The next morning you go to drink coffee as usual in the restaurant down along Sisowath Quay. You find out by chance by glancing at the front page of a newspaper. It reads "A Chinese Man Murdered Last Night". He was shot three times by a revolver. It reminds you about something. You check the bullets remaining in the revolver that Sam gave you. There are exactly three left.

THE END

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