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# ANECDOTES FROM LIFE

(which should be told in Chinese but have to be told in English)

Ouyang Yu

1

he is going back he has already bought a ticket  
why in such a haste  
because he is sick, of and in australia  
his girl has left him a catholic girl whose parents object to her  
marrying a non-catholic oh the most beautiful girl in his factory  
in his work group  
another man also loves her a yugoslavian  
but she prefers him you have seen him you know what a fine  
young man he is  
having obtained a b.a. in philosophy  
taller than most of the chinese  
but her parents just don't allow her to marry him  
such stubborn people so backward in outlook so unenlightened  
in thinking  
the girl has to quit the factory to quit him  
but even in china no parents can stop their girls marrying the men  
they want to marry absolutely none can do that  
it's incredible that such things can have happened in a country  
that claims itself progressive and free  
i suppose what is at work is  
damned white supremacy

2

i lived in the states for one year and a half you know  
but for the scholarship i got here i would not have come  
America is a much better place oh definitely much better never  
like this  
so desolate after dark not even a ghost to be seen

well i stayed in new york you know columbia university  
to be frank just about everything is better  
no racism no the sort of thing that happened in los angeles is too  
rare  
it is so easy to make money even in recession  
you can always find a casual job for five or six dollars  
not too little considering the cheap board and lodging  
and the people are so nice when i arrived i had with me two big  
suitcases weighing 30 kilograms each and when i got up the stairs  
in the subway people behind me stopped to let me pass and when  
i reached the school dormitory there were a lot of people help-  
ing me carry them i was really moved  
even a tiny little detail like passing through the customs makes a  
lot of difference in the states nobody checked my things but in  
Tullumarine Airport they checked through my stuff so thorough-  
ly like X-ray that i felt transparent and i was made to look a bit-  
ter fool when they commented coolly on my rice cooker  
nobody here would give you a hand you know  
what i think about it?  
i think australians don't really like us chinese or asians yes that's  
right i know what you mean exactly it is a bit like squeezed  
between super-powers made to constantly feel uneasy and impo-  
tent but still persistent in the belief in their own damned superi-  
ority that is only a poor shadow of the past inherited from their  
great british brutish forefathers  
what my suggestion to make the country powerful  
well easy enough more people  
more and more people that's all and opening up special econom-  
ic zones  
to allow for intense economic competition and to put down a  
few airs  
regarding their easy and lazy  
ways of life  
well who knows anyway these days

3

to tell you the truth i haven't fucked an australian woman ever  
since i came to australia and i haven't even thought of fucking one  
to me they look all the same are simply too ugly repellent smelly  
dressed awkwardly behaving strangely like a man that's what real-

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ly pissed me off you know however i did get fucked one bright morning when i was going to the city i was sitting by the window the 256 stopped at somewhere near the shopping mall and my casual glance out the window caught a group of teenagers lolling nearby what are they doing at such an early hour it was around eight you know then i recalled that it was time for school just when i took my glance back i saw this fat masculine girl holding out her hairy hand with all the fingers closed up and only the middle finger thrust out like an abnormal clitoris at me AT ME but the bus was already moving away and the abnormal clitoris nailed in my innocent eyes and i regretted to myself i had not even time to retaliate by doing some exhibitionist trick of showing her my oriental rooster i often thought of that in my later days in australia

the other day i was turning into a parking lot in my carmira i didn't notice another car also turning into it from the opposite side i decided not to give way and as i was easing myself between the two white lines i found the same fucking gesture that the yellow haired ape—for that lass did look an ape to me—held up for me muttering something with her tiny hole of a mouth that never showed the upper teeth she was gone but the middle finger that protruded through the window pane stood like another weird clitoris haunting me s/till today

funny isn't it again the other day when i can't remember exactly the same sort of fucking gesture was poked at me again and again and again from a guy who almost jumped out his window at me for i saw him in my interior rear mirror and without thinking my own left hand left the wheel and its middle finger went out facing his way over my shoulder sure that it could catch his fucking eyes it did while my car was turning another round-about then lost him my wife said he was half out of his window shouting obscenities i said did you see him she said yes and my son said yes i saw him with a mane of red hair i said in chinese fuck his mother's cunt and fuck his ancestors whoever they were and my wife stopped me saying it's not nice to say these things in your son's presence and i said i know it's not but it's even less nice to do these things in the presence of foreigners like us in australia did we ever do that to any foreigners in china?

4

where are all the australians  
after a few years he wonders to himself  
all the people he met are NOT australian:  
the guy who runs the grocery store across the street  
is from yugoslavia whose son the big-headed one once said to him  
in answer to his question why cigarettes were so expensive in  
australia:  
This is not China This is Australia  
how did he bloody know i am chinese we never even asked that  
question  
he wondered  
which pissed him off and he never even looked at the b(p)ig-head  
again  
the guy who let the house to him is from bulgaria  
the woman who runs the milk bar is from vietnam who was infu-  
riated with his second ignorant inquiry about liquor:  
I told you before  
This is not a liquor store This is a Milk Bar  
in a voice not too friendly  
the guy sitting next to him with a dark lean face in a poetry read-  
ing revealed to him at the end that he was spanish-chinese-  
malaysian  
the woman who introduced him to radio audience introduced  
herself as polish-jewish  
the guy for whom he worked some time as a kitchen-hand is a  
malaysian-chinese who pays him 30 dollars for 8 hours who  
thinks the guy across the street who runs a pizza store is too stu-  
pid  
his wife comes back with the story that when they have tea all  
the factory divides into groups of different nationalities  
turkish talking to turkish vietnamese to vietnamese chinese to  
chinese yugoslavs to yugoslavs

where are all the australians  
he often wonders  
until one day he bumpered into this real australian who says he's  
born in australia

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he's some sort of a politician claiming some knowledge of asia etc  
he had an argument with him  
he always had since then  
with genuine australians  
for genuine australians are always very bigoted people  
who don't watch t.v. who think they are better than anyone else  
in the world  
who is afraid of competition  
who hates other people talking too much  
about themselves who—  
but the argument was he remembers about whether australia  
was really  
a country at all  
he said that from a chinese point of view  
it was not  
it was a fake country  
because first of all  
it has an english flag and celebrates an english queen's birthday  
so that when you want to become an australian citizen you swear  
allegiance to the queen and you become instead queen's subjects  
can you imagine he asked a chinese swearing allegiance to an  
emperor  
excavated from an ancient tomb  
secondly your country is fake because you don't have your own  
national  
language  
you speak write and think english and if you do that you are not  
really  
australian you are english that is why even today you pride your-  
self on  
english-awarded degrees english-awarded prizes english-awarded  
honours english-awarded people and now you lean to the other  
side you  
watch too much american you cover too much american in your  
media  
you drink too much coke pepsi macdonald and what not  
but you never seem to have your own soul your genuine self you  
are  
always either english or american or such things  
how sad  
and thirdly the most funny thing you after two hundred years still  
regard yourself as european

where are you really  
you are close to the Antarctica  
that's all i know of  
no you are not part of asia nor of europe nor of america  
if you want to gain independence  
you have to be yourself  
australia in a place that is none of those things  
but is called  
Oceania  
the guy of course did not agree with him for you know genuine  
australians  
never agree with anybody even if they know they are wrong  
they don't even like to hear it pointed out to them that they are  
wrong  
but that is that i don't care  
australia has to rely on something you know  
either english or america or china or indonesia or india  
it can never rely on itself  
sure thing

5

they look so out of place anywhere  
whether before Mayer in Northland on Great Ocean Road or  
Bondi Beach

like obsolete quotations taken out of the context

one wonders why they are here at all  
they can't even get their 'r's or 'l's right sometimes

prisoners in an alien space created by themselves

i saw the guy standing there burying his head in the paper loaded  
with ancient characters absorbed in something he could only like  
from a tyranny of racist distance

patriotic traitor birds who stay where they like with no pangs of  
conscience

i can't help go out to them particularly the women folk those

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ethereal things who so easily change their identity from here to eternity

dreams that do not even have a sleep to sleep in

and footnotes

6

that night you told me that you do not belong to any class at all in australia you manage to live in a vacuum using everything second hand is this a second-hand country or what you often wonder you even feel like a second-hand man but you obviously know the metaphor that australia is full of second-hand europeans as chinese you probably are not even second-hand you are third-hand fourth-hand last-hand or multiple-hand already you are pissed off by this second-hand fact

but i told you that it's all right to be second hand you at least have something first hand right? your freedom

you said fuck off freedom which is meant only for the rich that can buy freedom is not for life but for sale you said you've got to think about life some more you said you've been thinking all the while

but i told you to have a look at the way ordinary australians live like they sleep like animals on the lawn in the sun on sundays without a shadow of nightmares of war or famine or disaster or revolution without even imagining it they exercise their life away in gymnasiums criss-cross with shining steel instruments building up postcolonial muscles...

to what purpose? you interrupted and continued, only to be spent in shit or love or drinking reveries or writing books for the body hardly ever for the brain you said that's the problem with australians you know

i said that's the problem with all the rich peaceful countries mate they have got so much time and money and energy to spend that they become perverse and think perhaps to be a bit stupid is

good

well what's the point of criticising as long as you can lead a peaceful life even if it is poor both of you wondered as chinese you know what that really means

you don't want to think no more