



A Love Letter



a Homage to
Lay Bradbury

Nagamitz Kazuhiro

A Love Letter, a Homage to Lay Bradbury

“A Love Letter”

an Homage to maestro Lay Bradbury

written in the summer of 2012, when the great author deceased,

by Nagamitz Kazuhiro

My Dear,

I regret it took so long to finish this letter. I had hoped to post this early last week, but it took until today because of my hesitation, and I kept rewriting it until now. I cut a lot from my first writing and then added some back and again removed more... I am not yet sure if I have written it properly - I wonder if I should not have made it briefer. Now I know I cannot delay any longer for the longer I keep this letter, the greater will your concern be.

There are many things I have to let you know. There are so many that I do not know where to start. It is fortunate that I have forgotten many of the things which had happened to me. It is fortunate that a person's memory has a limit. We forget many bad things but there are some which never fade away because they have left scar on our heart or body.

A person's name is insignificant, and I changed my name more than a dozen of times from various reasons. It was when I was sixteen that I was exposed to the atomic bomb in Hiroshima and a change took place in my body - a biological change. Before the exposure, I was suffering from a strange disease related to pituitary gland. It was a kind of disease by which one gets corpulent. My body weight increased exceedingly and got unbalanced compared to my height, and with that I became easy to get tired. My doctor had said that I would live no more than two or three years.

As the war got worse, we students were sent to work at various places. The working place of our class was a military factory and we were engaged in conveying machines and weapons, and I was always tired and hated the work. I was scolded on more than a few occasions for being slow at doing the work, and when they had learnt that I had a disease, they planned to transfer me to a newly-built second factory where the labor was less physical the next day. I was looking forward to the transfer but it was postponed one day, and it was a day before the transfer that the atomic bomb was dropped.

If I had been transferred that day I probably would have been killed because the second factory was only 200 meters from the ground zero of the blast and all the students there were reported to be killed. I was therefore working in the older factory in Yoshijima-cho, about 300 meters from the ground zero when the bomb exploded. I immediately lost my consciousness.

It was two days after the bombing that I recovered my consciousness in a large room at a hospital. So it was 1945-8-8. I found myself groaning and it was due to headache. I was laid on a bed with a thin white sheet over me; I was sweating and thirsty. There were many patients on the beds and some of them were groaning and others were either already dead or silently dying. Many were covered with bandage. I found I was not, and after searching I discovered that I had not gotten burned or scarred anywhere. But I had the headache and it would last long. I groaned all day for it was an unbearable headache. In those difficult days after the bombing, medicine and drugs were in short and I was given less than enough painkiller and I had sleepless nights.

In the first few weeks, I experienced the unbearable headache caused by the radiation damage, but eventually my headache began to subside. Nonetheless I could not sleep. Even after the headache had completely gone, I could not sleep. This was a strange thing, and a fearful thing, for I did not know what changes had occurred in my body. It is always frightening not to know anything about a change that is occurring in one's body.

I explained about this to the doctors, but they paid little attention to me. In the midst of thousands of bomb survivors who had been seriously burnt or injured, a person only complaining headache or insomnia did not count as a patient. And the doctors said I was only imagining that I had not slept while in fact I did sleep unknowingly and ordered me to leave the hospital. But I really could not sleep at all.

There was another strange thing. It appeared that my chronic disease of the pituitary

seemed to have healed, for gradually my weight returned to normal, and I regained a well-balanced figure. My chronic fatigue seemed to have gone too.

But I did not sleep for about three years. After that I began to sleep again. I slept for nearly two years without waking. My mother, who was the only immediate family member of mine after my father had been killed in a battle in a Pacific island, thought that I became a vegetable and was hopeless of my recovery. But she took care of me. She said that I had retained appetite and when she put small soft food in my mouth, I would open my eyes thinly and chewed and swallowed the food. And one day in the second year of long sleep I recovered my consciousness, and behaved as if nothing had been wrong with me. My mother was of course very surprised and happy.

When this mysterious five years passed, I remained physically at the age of sixteen when I ought to have been like a grown-up of 21. I thought that the radioactivity or a combination of radioactivity and sunbeam that I took that day fundamentally changed the function of my pituitary gland. Then I thought that this abnormal phenomenon was caused by the combined effect of my strange disease and the atomic bomb disease.

I did not think that the hormone that administers physical growth had completely stopped emerging in my body, but I thought that its speed probably became several hundreds or thousands of times slower. In other words, I grow only one day older physically during the five years. Therefore, I did not stop growing, I thought, and I did not get immortal. It's been many years since the day of the atomic bombing and my body has scarcely grown. My body age is still 16, for the length of about 5 years is equivalent to only one day for my body.

I do not sleep for about three years and then sleep for about two years afterwards, and this cycle has repeated all the time and will repeat until I perish.

I had to devise a way to maintain life during the long sleeps. Initially, I relied on my mother, my only immediate family; but since she died in 1950, I found and stayed in a safe place throughout my hibernations. I cannot tell where it is even to you.

Because I move scarcely during sleeping, I need not much food during the two-year hibernation. I only keep preserved food for the time when I wake up temporarily due to hunger pain. Thus, I have been able to survive the hibernation periods safely in the secret place. I would say the chance of survival was greater during the hibernation

than during the active life.

I have come to know no less than 500 men, sometimes dated two or three at the same time. The first one was a US military officer, who had fought in the Korean war and had been stationed in Hiroshima after the war. The American fell in love with me at first sight, and I dated with him several months. But I quitted him when he was ordered to go back to US and tried to take me there. I disappeared from him. I hid in the secret place. It was hard for me too for I liked him.

After my first relationship every man I came to know was shocked when they found I, who always looked a young girl, had not been a virgin. Sometimes they were so shocked they left me. Sometimes, they changed and I left them. I never was a prostitute. But I found that life was easier if I lived with a man. But I never thought of marrying a man. I knew I could not continue a relationship with a man any more than a few years for I would sooner or later fall in hibernation.

Sometimes I left men when they began to suspect my physical abnormality. I never wanted others, except my mother, to know about it. I kept pretending to sleep besides the men without falling into a sleep.

I got pregnant more than a few times. I always had an abortion without letting the partner know about it. I was afraid that my disease would cause the child to have an abnormality of some kind, and above all I suspected that it would take decades from pregnancy to delivery in my abnormal body. And, of course, a baby cannot survive with an unmarried mother who sleeps for two years on end.

And now you came. What beautiful eyes you have! And you proposed to me even though we met only less than a month ago. I refused, saying I will write the reason in a letter. And this is the letter - my first love letter I ever have written, at the age of 83.

Sincerely,

For the updated version of this story, or other works of the author: amazon.com/author/nagamitz-kazuhiro

for Japanese version:

<http://p.booklog.jp/book/57142/read>