



## Hidemi's Rambling No.291

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After a quarter of my furniture arrived at my new apartment, I returned to my old place. It snowed very heavily on the day of my departure. When I was about to leave the apartment, it stopped snowing once, and I walked to the nearest train station instead of calling a cab. The moment I got to the station, it started snowing again, even more heavily. I was waiting for the local train at the platform, seeing an unreal view. Everything was entirely covered with snow and it seemed as if there was nothing but mountains. Only a vast white ground spread out between the mountains and me. I felt like I was in the movie ' Fargo '. The train didn't come after the arrival time had passed. The station was unmanned as it was too remote, and no announcement was available. I thought it was delayed by heavy snow. Time went on. I began to feel uneasy because I had a bullet train to catch at the terminal station. There was a man who was also waiting for the train, and he used the station's emergency phone to call the terminal. He kindly came back to me and let me know that the local train service was suspended due to snow. I called a cab with my cell phone, got to the terminal and barely caught the bullet train for which I had the reserved ticket. I had never been in such heavy snow in my life. Can I really move in and live in the place where it snows hard enough to stop the train...?

## Hidemi's Rambling No.292

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The other night, I had a dream about joining the military. I was going through various kinds of training and failed each one of them. As I couldn't do any physical activities, the training officer asked me if I could cook or wash. I answered honestly I couldn't do either. The officer asked my former profession and I told him that I was a singer-songwriter. He suggested me to be in the entertainment division, but I refused because I didn't like to perform in front of people. There was nothing I could do. Then, for some reason, I was deployed to Afghanistan. And I woke up. It was a wild dream but the part that I couldn't do anything satisfactorily was a fact. Getting out of bed, I realized again how little I could do. It's a wonder I still survive in this world...

## Hidemi's Rambling No.293

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While I was packing my stuff to move to my new place, I inadvertently dropped a scale model of a Formula One car yesterday. It's a McLaren MP4/6 with Ayrton Senna in it, and handmade by my American friend who made it for me and gave me as a gift a long time ago. A rear wing, a front flap, a mirror and a steering wheel came off. The model is so elaborate and the repair seems to require delicate work. I'm not so confident of repairing it as good as it was, and felt depressed. I talked about it to my partner later, and he hinted it had been already broken before I dropped it. When I asked him what he meant, he guiltily confessed that he had once dropped it by himself a few years before. Because the damage was on the opposite side of the display, he hadn't told me that to this date. His big secret was out. I felt a little easier to find out that I was not to blame. But it remains broken all the same...

## Hidemi's Rambling No.294

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I check the TV listings online everyday. I found a TV show that featured the town I was moving to. I was looking forward to it in front of the TV. When the show started, I realized it was about how to live inexpensively after retiring. The town was introduced as the area that had many budget apartments where retirees with a drastic income drop could afford and save money. The show chose a couple of apartments as super money-saver ones of all others. To my surprise, my new apartment was one of them! Seeing the exact building I was about to move in on TV, I felt delighted and embarrassed at the same time. To sum up, the apartment I selected is one of the best bargain apartments located in the least expensive area in Japan. It proved my discerning eye as a bargain hunter, but also declared my new place was the cheapest in the country on national television. I have a low income, all right, but I'm not retiring...

## Hidemi's Rambling No.295

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I've written for several times that I'm such an avid fan of Formula One. With 36 days to go for the new season, a few teams launched their new cars and the test session has been under way. I check the result on the Internet, fascinated by the beautiful new cars. Japan experienced the Formula One boom from late 1980s to early 1990s. Now, there is not a vestige of it. While soccer and martial arts are very popular in Japan, I seldom hear people talking about Formula One these days. Since the boom was gone, a TV broadcast for the qualifying session has been confined to a short digest. The race is recorded and aired past midnight on Sundays, the slot most people don't watch TV. It's getting unpopular year after year and the qualifying isn't even aired at all in the area I'm moving to. I'm afraid that commercial broadcasting stops airing Formula One altogether. It seems that soon I will end up watching it on expensive cable TV. Formula One is really costly, through and through...

## Hideki's Rambling No.296

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February is the time that most universities and colleges hold an entrance examination in Japan. When I was a senior at high school, I applied for five universities and one college. I failed all five universities. They send the result by mail and put it up on the campus too. An applicant is allotted a number and the numbers of passed applicants are put up on a big bulletin board there. For one of the universities I applied, I was fairly confident about passing after the examination, and I went to see the result at the campus alone before receiving it by mail. There were lots of numbers on the big board and I was quite sure mine was among them. But it wasn't. I failed the exam. And there, I discovered a human reaction to totally huge despair: laugh. To my surprise, completely unaware, I laughed. Besides the applicants, around the board were students who were recruiting those who passed to their clubs and circles, and people at local businesses who were looking for part-timers. Because I laughed, they thought I passed and they flooded around me at once. They handed numerous fliers to me, saying 'Congratulations!' I came home by subway. At the station, I dropped to a trash bin a big bundle of fliers that were meant for only those who passed. Tears also fell. During the subway ride, I felt like my life was going in a long endless tunnel instead of a train. I remember how dark my future seemed that day...

## Hidemi's Rambling No.297

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Hiring specifically new graduates is a Japanese companies' custom. If you fail to enter a university after finishing high school and spend another year to take an entrance examination again a year later, you would be one year older than other new graduates, and that is a big disadvantage to be hired at a Japanese company. When I failed all universities I applied for, my hope to work at a big company as a super career woman was crushed. The college I passed belonged to the same school as the high school I went to, and wasn't effective to open a gate for a big company upon graduation. Come to think of it, the dream of my youth was purely based on my vanity because I don't think I'm cut out for a nine-to-five job nor I don't want to be a business person. I can't even wake up in the morning to begin with. But I was young and stupid enough then, and totally at a loss for what to do for life, as I lost my hope and purpose entirely...



## Hidemi's Rambling No.298

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In Japan, St. Valentine's Day is the day that women give chocolate to men. When I was a freshman at high school, I had a big crush on my math teacher and gave him a handmade chocolate cake on Valentine's Day. I wasn't interested in cooking at all and never helped my grandmother and my mother in the kitchen. Although cooking was an unknown territory for me, I decided to make a chocolate cake on a whim. It turned out to be way harder and more time-consuming than I thought. I made two cakes and chose the better-looking one for the teacher and the other to be stored in the fridge for my family and myself. I handed the cake to the teacher at school and was so happy because he seemed pleased. I came home in a good mood and tried the other cake in the fridge myself. My good mood was extinguished on the spot. It tasted horrible. I'd never had such a terrible cake before, and haven't since. Of course I tasted it to make sure while cooking, but I did so for chocolate icing, not for sponge cake. As you know, chocolate can't go wrong, but sponge cake possibly can. I felt awful imagining the teacher was having the vicious cake with his colleagues or his family on Valentine's Day...

## **Hidemi's Rambling No.299**

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As I've been packing my stuff to move out this apartment, various things of sentimental value to me have come out from the back of the shelves. I've lived here for nine years and forgotten about most of them since I stored them away. Some are no longer useful, but when I clear them out, I feel as if I threw away my past. That makes me melancholy. Occasionally, I find some money. It's like I get a bonus for packing, but it's simply what I stashed by myself in the first place and not what I newly gained. Mostly, what I find are numerous room slippers and old broken appliances. I don't understand why I kept so many slippers without using. Packing and moving requires a great deal of labor and time. Worst of all, the broken appliances appear one after another and discarding them is costly. I have to pay for each one of them just to dump...

## Hidemi's Rambling No.300

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These days, I've had nightmares about living in a deserted, out-of-the-way place repeatedly. In them, I was forced to join a dreary folk festival in deep snow with a handful of local people, or I was surrounded by uncivilized people whose language I didn't understand, or I lived in an ancient, old-fashioned building. Those dreams seem to represent my vague unease for moving to my new place that is located in a remote, mountainous, snowy region. I've completed a song I'd been working on for seven years, and I'm about to move out the apartment I've lived for nine years. I'm moving to a whole new town where I have no acquaintances, and I'll start promoting our latest song and recording a new song. From then onward, I don't know how my life goes. I believe it will be wonderful as long as I stay alive without giving up. I will enjoy and cherish every process to a new step, which hopefully would be the better one...