

第七屆 全球華文青年文學獎

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文學翻譯組譯文原稿

請用中文翻譯下列合共三篇英文原稿

1. Coincidences

I am fond of coincidences, first because they cock a snook at all mechanistic, determinist philosophy. They don't disprove it, of course, but at least they make a rude gesture at it. We are inclined to be overawed nowadays by the doctrine that our genes and our early environment have so entirely conditioned us that any choice you make, any action you take, is – you being you – inevitable; free will is an illusion; every choice or action is predetermined by a continuous line of cause and effect within you. Coincidence breaks that line, or seems to, because it represents an intervention of the unpredictable: it says, 'one thing does not necessarily lead to another': it proffers a meeting, a relationship which cannot be accounted for by any rational theory. As though two engines, running obediently on two different sets of metals, should leap the tracks, puff across the countryside towards each other, and touch buffers; pure, charming, absurd chance!

The modern physicist, I am delighted to tell you, allows a certain play, a certain 'give', in the otherwise rigid laws of nature. Coincidence, pure chance, is to me a poetic image of that play. And it is often playful – a sort of irresponsible, cosmic joker: sometimes a malignant joker. Given all the circumstances and specifications, it was deemed predictable that the 'Titanic' on her maiden voyage would not meet an iceberg and could not be sunk by one. But she did, and she was. Thomas Hardy wrote a poem about it, 'The Convergence of the Twain'. He imagines that, while the 'smart ship' is building, 'The Immanent Will that stirs and urges everything Prepared a sinister mate for her – so gaily great – A shape of Ice, for the time far and dissociate'. Ship and iceberg become 'twin halves of one august event'. And that is another way of looking at coincidence: to see it, not as pure chance, but as the work of some Power whose intentions we cannot fathom and whose operations we cannot predict. This is fundamentally a religious attitude: chance is elevated by Hardy into a purposive kind of fate. You may call it superstitious; at any rate, many poets have to feel that way.

“Coincidences” by C. Day Lewis (368 words)



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2. Notes of a Native Son

He was, I think, very handsome. I gather this from photographs and from my own memories of him, dressed in his Sunday best and on his way to preach a sermon somewhere, when I was little. Handsome, proud, and ingrown, "like a toenail," somebody said. But he looked to me, as I grew older, like pictures I had seen of African tribal chieftains: he really should have been naked, with warpaint on and barbaric mementos, standing among spears. He could be chilling in the pulpit and indescribably cruel in his personal life and he was certainly the most bitter man I have ever met; yet it must be said that there was something else in him, buried in him, which lent him his tremendous power and, even, a rather crushing charm. It had something to do with his blackness, I think—he was very black—with his blackness and his beauty, and with the fact that he knew that he was black but did not know that he was beautiful. He claimed to be proud of his blackness but it had also been the cause of much humiliation and it had fixed bleak boundaries to his life. He was not a young man when we were growing up and he had already suffered many kinds of ruin; in his outrageously demanding and protective way he loved his children, who were black like him and menaced, like him; and all these things sometimes showed in his face when he tried, never to my knowledge with any success, to establish contact with any of us. When he took one of his children on his knee to play, the child always became fretful and began to cry; when he tried to help one of us with our homework the absolutely unabating tension which emanated from him caused our minds and our tongues to become paralyzed, so that he, scarcely knowing why, flew into a rage and the child, not knowing why, was punished. If it ever entered his head to bring a surprise home for his children, it was, almost unfailingly, the wrong surprise and even the big watermelons he often brought home on his back in the summertime led to the most appalling scenes. I do not remember, in all those years, that one of his children was ever glad to see him come home.

Excerpted from *Notes of a Native Son* by James Baldwin (393 words)

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3. Henry David Thoreau's Journal

I am glad to remember tonight as I sit by my door that I too am at least a remote descendent of that heroic race of men of whom there is tradition. I too sit here on the shore of my Ithaca a fellow wanderer and survivor of Ulysses. How Symbolical, significant of I know not what the pitch pine stands here before my door unlike any glyph I have seen sculptured or painted yet—One of nature's later designs. Yet perfect as her Grecian art. There it is, a done tree. Who can mend it? And now where is the generation of heroes whose lives are to pass amid these our northern pines? Whose exploits shall appear to posterity pictured amid these strong and shaggy forms? . . .

The Great spirit of course makes indifferent all times & places. The place where he is seen is always the same, and indescribably pleasant to all our senses. We had allowed only near-lying and transient circumstances to make our occasions—But nearest to all things is that which fashions its being. Next to us the grandest laws are being enacted and administered. . . .

Verily a good house is a temple—A clean house—pure and undefiled, as the saying is. I have seen such made of white pine. Seasoned and seasoning still to eternity. Where a Goddess might trail her garment. The less dust we bring in to nature, the less we shall have to pick up. It was a place where one would go in, expecting to find something agreeable; as to a shade—or to a shelter—a more natural place.

Excerpted from Henry David Thoreau's *Journal* (275 words)

