

**GLEANINGS
OF
HAZELNUTS IN CHINESE**

The pace of the street was exactly as it was every evening. The reflection of the setting sun on the building across the street glowed as it had the Friday before. The air was still warm from the dry summer day that had preceded it. Small swirls of dust from cracked sidewalks and snaking traffic could still be seen in the angled, red light. Groups of idle men were still drinking tea in the local cafes. The luster of their lazily clinking glasses reflected into the street where vagrants and gypsies were still begging from passers-by. An invisible, slowing force surrounded everything.

A young man with a drink stood behind a paneled wall of glass on the top floor of a high ceiling apartment building and watched the street below. His waiting rested on the memory of the peculiar way a woman held her lips half parted whenever she looked at him. Their first meeting had set a weekly precedent. It had started with a mysteriously muffled call from a friend, then he was greeted by an unexpected voice – pettily packaged and lightly smoke touched.

Despite not having seen each other, the conversation had carried chemistry enough to meet for drinks the next night. She called him the next afternoon however – hours before the agreed upon time, slightly drunk and playfully not making sense. He explained that he was in the middle of work but found himself after two connections, a short run and an hour later on the top floor of a seaside bar – already many drinks in and kissing between laughs and cigarettes. It had been his every intention to go home alone; but as she lit one of the last cigarettes of the evening, she'd looked up at him with such real warmth, lips half parted, as if torn from a past, forgotten kiss.

The young man looked back at the changing street and its stream of life. He opened one panel to rest his arms on the window frame. The air smelled of trees he didn't recognize, cars and cigarettes

and was filled with the dissonant sound of countless car horns. The long, summer sun stubbornly filled his room with failing light, but was steadily growing darker.

The melodious, haunting call to prayer from the local mosque began and he reflexively turned down the music he had on repeat. After the last echoes died down from the thousands of other mosques in the metropolis, he turned the music back up and as he had time – she hadn't even called yet to tell him that she'd left – he made himself another drink.

He first saw the woman, probably a gypsy based off of her clothing, when he almost spilled his whiskey from a miscellany of city birds nearly flying into his window. Startled from below, they had rushed past him in a nearly vertical rise, then sharply peeled away to settle back into the collecting mass near her. Instead of begging, she was selling some small disposable items, tissues or throw away lottery tickets, at a modest mark up. It was a common enough practice, an amicable agreement between castes. You could buy the items at a slightly cheaper price at any proper store, but most of the people who were giving money didn't take them anyway. They approached and left her at the same steady rate, their coins a modern alms to good manners and the intangible compulsions of polite society.

She was accompanied by a small girl – her daughter he guessed – no more than seven years old. The child was sitting on a piece of misshapen concrete leftover from the day's disorganized construction work, happily concentrated on eating her ice cream; no doubt some disingenuous Ramadan donation from a neighborhood store. Periodically, when the little girl could spare a moment to look up, she would jump to her feet to disperse the birds congregating around the bread left for the poor in the grassy median where her mother stood.

The stale, leftover bread hanging in bags from the low lying trees attracted every type of bird. Over and over again, when the mass reached a playful enough size, the girl ran giggling toward its center with ice cream in tow to jump and skip and laugh while the birds flew to a safe distance. The little girl was oblivious to her mother's look of concern as she ran back and forth between the birds. Each time she simply settled back into her upturned, concrete chair, furrowing her brow in competition

with the residual heat of the day, and got back to work on her ice cream with the endlessly extending minutes of childhood.

As lights in the building across from him started to come on, the young man's oblique gaze changed with his peripheral vision. His unfocused eyes first saw it as a whole, like a giant piece of jewelry with irregularly hanging pieces of precious, reflecting metal. The darkened apartments were slowly changing into a patchwork of light. His eyes made a cursory, unspecific survey of the various floors of light, then widened, suddenly aligning with the floor parallel to his. The concrete of the building seemed to soften with his stare and the illuminated windows became an aperture to an extended diorama of their inhabitant's evening lives.

Their window was almost exactly as large as his. He could see a large group of formally dressed, mustached men and a smaller group of equally formally head-scarfed women. If he looked very carefully he could see past the open sitting room and down a short connecting hallway. There was a beautiful woman in her early thirties; her hips swayed gracefully as she carried a tray of coffee down the long apartment corridor. Maybe a marriage proposal ceremony? He looked back at the group of men and saw a young man that everyone seemed to be centered around. He looked completely out of place, too light skinned for this country and too young for the woman to marry. Maybe a foreigner like himself?

The diffident steps – the feigned trips back and forth from the kitchen – of an unmistakably happy woman could be seen. Her shoulder length, black hair was held motionless in the air with each smiling turn of her body. Their shared life and the unusual circumstances of their union played out like a familiar film in front of his eyes and he guessed at everyone's motives easily enough.

She probably couldn't help but take her time and savor each step from the joy she felt knowing her future happiness was guaranteed. She had probably by the sheerest accident fallen deeply in love with this young man. By an equally unlikely accident, the young man had fallen deeply in love with her. He wasn't of the faith maybe, but if she was really honest with herself, neither was she. They

would have to lie about that for a while, but nothing worth having comes easily. Besides, once they had their first child – she needed the love of her own baby almost as much as she needed him – he could be the crown prince nonbeliever from Pluto for all her family cared. This same young man was now sitting with her family in their home. She had gone through the proper steps of preparation, taught him the exact words to say and how to ceremonially kiss her parents' hands.

They had finally decided to make the proposal after her captious, conservative Mother had finally given her consent – probably only because of the good status of his family and his willingness to learn their language – which she had done a few days ago in private to her daughter. All she had to do now was bring the coffee to the expecting party and the rest would be assured. Just this one last link in the long chain of gestures that she had shielded themselves with and it would be done. Just this last summer night's obligation and the spring they had spent in each other's arms would go on forever.

Like the moon calls the tides, so these nights called another wave from the man watching from his window. The periodic and uncaring emotion gripped him, a residual shock wave from a frozen lake parted long ago.

A second apartment, diagonally down from the first, lit up an empty balcony. An apparently forgotten green bottle of wine had been left standing on the balcony railing. Unable to see directly inside the apartment, it was surprising then when a beautiful, smiling woman rushed out to eagerly grab the bottle, slightly sloshing its contents on the concrete floor. She too looked around thirty with very soft features and a round face, but with shorter, black hair. She was obviously from this country and dressed professionally, like that of a lawyer or banker. Just as the woman turned to go inside, she was met halfway by a man a few years younger than himself. The woman's face was full of pleasure with half parted, anticipating lips. The younger man pulled her close to him and they kissed and laughed. The woman blushed deeply and took the younger man's hand to quickly lead him back inside their apartment.

His eyes drifted further down the building and its ever growing amount of illuminated

apartments. Near ground level, from an extreme angle, he watched a couple apparently fighting. They voicelessly yelled and screamed at each other in short, uncontrolled outbursts. The woman's long, flowing black hair gleamed in the light and covered her round face in a tangled disarray. Her wet, ruddy cheeks belied her age; only the worn laugh lines and softly smoke touched skin showed that she was in her thirties.

The younger man held her now tear soaked face in his hands, her lips half parted in disbelief. The man kissed her and turned to go back into the apartment. The woman collapsed against the balcony wall as the man disappeared from view. He reappeared moments later violently exiting the building, crossing the grassy median, and walked past the gypsy woman and her child.

All the other beggars had left the darkening intersection. The night only brought unsympathetic customers to drink at bars and drunkenly eat at the nearby restaurants. Despite this, the woman had stubbornly continued with her sparsely filled box of cheap goods. It was a sad tableau of poverty and indifference, but her clear eyes and proudly straight pose saved it from being truly pitiable.

Unexpectedly, and all at once, the lamps of the emptying street came on and, to the young man's deep disappointment, it was clear why the gypsy woman had persisted meaninglessly in the dark. She dropped her box to catch her daughters hand as the little girl tried to run toward the stoplight ahead of them. She picked up the excited child and they waved down the street together. Slowly, from the opposite side of the intersection, a man rode a bicycle toward them. He had on strangely similar clothing and a side saddle boy sitting in front of him. They returned the mother and daughter's waves as only a gypsy man and boy by traffic light and street lamps can.

When they embraced each other, it was clear they were a family. The father kissed the mother and daughter and the children began to tease each other and compare their makeshift distractions and food. The parents calmed their children and they carefully crossed the street, each adult holding a child's hand. They sat protectively on either end of the children as they ate their street food and resumed where the mother had left off with her box of cheap goods.

Passers-by continually patted the children's heads good-naturedly but gave nothing to the parents. In the new stage light of the night, her black head scarf and his matching head dress made it obvious that they're weren't gypsies at all, but rather war refugees from a neighboring country.

The echo of the repeating music from his open apartment door accompanied him along the spiral staircase to the street. The young man felt obligated to say something as he approached the family; but before he had a chance to, the father started urgently talking to him in a language he couldn't understand, surely Arabic. The black, broken fingernails of his cupped hands motioned alternately from the young man to his family. His eyes looked up once more, then he buried his desperate, plaintive expression in the ground at the young man's feet. Dirty splotches and cuts covered the children's brown, bare, sun burnt arms and the mother brought them closer to her, staring at him with large, doleful eyes. She was in her early thirties and had a beautiful round face and loosely covered, flowing black hair. Her lips, half parted, silently mouthed something unknown to the young man.

The young man started to speak, reaching into his wallet, but the interminable sounds of the city swallowed it and he looked back up at the different faces. He took out a thick envelope that had filled the wallet entirely. The father limply took the bursting paper from him, looked inside and started to cry. The children broke free of their mother and ran toward him, unfamiliar with figures and currency, but acutely aware of the unexpected reaction. The father spoke again and tried to return some of the money given to him. The young man's body, almost of its own accord, without looking back, started toward the still open apartment building. "Guess who?" Darkness, soft hands and a familiar perfume covered his eyes and nose. The perfume was so familiar, he was in love with her before he turned around.

They kissed quickly and she laughed. She took his hands in hers, then spun them both around and skipped to stand above him on the doorway steps. She was pretty, in her mid-twenties with short, colored, reddish brown hair – one of those lucky few people who seemed to be invariably smiling, not from lack of material or life experiences to the contrary, but through good humor and conscious effort.

Many months had already passed, but he only had a vague notion that she worked locally in some capacity as an academic, that she was leaving soon for a program abroad, and that she seemed to genuinely like him.

“I saw you with those people begging over there.” She said in her language; they mixed languages, never speaking one more than the other. “Were those people bothering you—Was the man crying?”

“I don't know” He said

“They sure can be convincing, but who knows with gypsies. They're like animals with foreigners.” She looked past him at an angle, pausing as if to consider something serious.

“Could they speak English?”

“No, they couldn't”

“So what were you doing near them then?”

“Nothing,” He said “I was on my way to meet you at the bus stop when they started talking to me”

“Well that's silly, I said I'd meet you at your apartment. I'm a big girl, you know.”

She was reaching into her purse for her phone, not paying attention and he was eager to keep it that way. His eyes smiled “Where shall we go eat?”

#

They came back to his apartment after he said he had forgotten his wallet. She offered to pay, but he insisted. After dinner and a number of drinks, they stood mostly naked at the paneled glass window that dominated the apartment. The young man held the smaller woman from behind and they both looked out at the cityscape, each entranced in their own moment. Smoke from the tip of their resting cigarettes lazily curled up through the cool air, passing along the parted curtains and out into the night.

“Do you love me?” She asked him

He answered her by saying that love isn't so important – but he supposed he didn't really.

“Love isn't important? She repeated “Then you've never been in love before”

He agreed with her, then said he's only ever known one person who's been in love.

“Who?”

He told her about a friend he'd had in college in Germany, his best friend, who'd fallen in love once with a woman from this country.

“You lived in Germany?”

“I thought you knew that about me” He said

“No— how long were you there for?”

“Oh, not long.”

“And she was from here?”

“Her family was, but she was born in Germany”

He continued without much enthusiasm and told her how they had fallen in love and believed it would be enough to bridge their families and cultures. After four years of dating, they were engaged, then she called everything off on his birthday to be with a man from her own country. The two were expecting a child together now.

“What happened to him?”

“Last time I saw him he was dripping wet, drunk in the snow, screaming that he remembered everything, absolutely everything, and he'd never forget, not even Hazelnuts in Chinese.”

“Hazel what?” She repeated the English, testing the new word with a question mark.

“Hazelnuts in Chinese— they'd met at a Chinese new years party or something. He was good with languages and had wanted to impress her by remembering a few words. I don't really know either I—”

“Well, that's not everyone's story” She sharply interrupted.

He agreed with her and asked her if she could tell him about anyone she knew who had fallen in love.

She was about to speak, but kissed him instead, then stepped away from the window to light a few tea candles she had in her purse. The half dark of the lit candles mixed with the soft glow of the street lamps.

“You always listen to the same music” She said very brightly. He noticed her blink several times to let the tears out of her eyes. To this he responded simply “I’m probably going to go deaf listening to this song” After a silence, he said again that he didn’t love her, but that he’s so similar to his old friend – they’re alike in almost every way – he surely would one day and that they should just get married like they had talked about before.

“You can’t just get married” She said quietly. She was silent for a moment then looked at him in a curious way “You have to love someone to marry them”

He took a deep drink from his glass, then said that it didn’t really matter, if it gave her any amount of pleasure now, they could marry right away, then drained his drink.

“Does this mean you’re coming with me to France in the fall?” She asked

“If we’re getting married, I suppose I should, but anywhere is fine”

“Can we get married here? I’d like to be close to my mother”

“We’ll get married wherever you want”

“You’re serious?”

“Yes”

There was another silence, then she kissed and hugged him all at once and said that she truly and dearly wanted to marry him and that they would discuss everything in the morning.

#

The room was dark and quiet except for the small, rounded sounds of the young woman’s steady breathing. A sleeplessness beckoned the young man to leave the wrapped, naked body around him and to meet it on the floor. As he carefully loosened himself from her and crawled down from the bed, he felt the girl’s purse next to his feet. Barely visible, he saw a small photo album slightly sticking out from it. She had shown it to him before and it had the usual menagerie of mementos, including a primary school class photo. He could make her out easily enough in the middle, she couldn’t have been more than seven years old. He remembered vaguely being told that a person’s eyes never change, but as

he looked at the photo again he was sure there was no way the woman lying naked on the bed next to him could see the same world as the little girl framed in front of him.

The young man went to the window to find something to drink, feeling himself fall into another world with each step. He looked to where the refugee family had been begging last night, but only saw a newly gathered mass of birds and bread fragments. The throng kept pushing toward the torn bag of bread now on the ground. It was still early and the metropolis was just starting to wake up. The sounds of the early bus lines and the street cleaners were the only allusions of the activity ahead.

Unhurriedly, He went back to the desk behind him to put on the repeating music and to finish the sundry of last night's forgotten drinks. He put on the repeating song, the song he had listened to while packing for his flight to this country. A little more than a year had passed since then but his current thoughts matched exactly those of that night. He looked at the scar on his hand, a permanent reminder of the drunken pain of his birthday from last year, marking the disquieting significance of another year gone by.

The repeating music played.

*"I apologize to the rain
For the tears I cried for you
I'll take the rose petals I dried
And for your sake leave
If a fairy enters your dream
Say the rose beauty is dead, she lost her talisman"*

The young man reached for the girl's pack of mentholated cigarettes still lying on the desk. The lip stick stained skeletons locked in the ash tray were now the only evidence that his evening had been

anything more than a pleasing phantasm. He lit a cigarette, but was more interested in watching something burn down than smoking. The smoke curled in regular patterns as the cigarette glowed and decayed. He let it burn down until he couldn't hold it anymore, then dropped it in the ashtray to join the others from last night.

He drank what was left and walked back to the window. Seeing the birds again, he tried to transpose the absent refugee girl to where she had been yesterday and lit another cigarette – finally coming to a rest with his arms on the frame of the open window. Looking across the way, eyes toward dawn, he absently sang with the music, intermittently pausing to deeply inhale the mixture of morning air and smoke – each breath more aware than the last of the life passing by.

He looked at the familiar apartment building across from him and saw the regular darkened outlines of people exiting from the surrounding buildings. There was a bending tail of ash now on his cigarette, but he didn't notice. He tried to picture what the buildings might look like behind the visible row in front of him. His mind jumped to the next row, and the next, all the way to the seaside, then crossed it. His mind's eye grew rapidly in scale, it saw the strait's bridges that connected the sprawling metropolis and its two continents. It flew further and saw the countries that laid behind the border, ever faster and higher it flew until it suddenly crashed. He was looking at a house in an American suburb. Acquaintances and family from a forgotten life looked back at him. Then he saw *her*. The massive swell of life in front of him, which had been almost too much to bear just the previous evening, was exactly, inexplicably perfect.

“I think this just might be the best cigarette of my life” He laughed.

As if cued by this laughing, the young man walked to a small corner closet and pulled out a traveling suitcase. He opened its top most compartment to reveal three worn looking letters. The repeating music interjected itself again.

“I apologize to the rain

For the tears I cried for you

I'll take the rose petals I dried

And for your sake leave

If a fairy enters your dream

Say the rose beauty is dead, she lost her talisman”

The letters were well worn from repeated folding and unfolding and variously dated to many months ago. Besides a few lines written in the local language, they were written completely in German.

#1

I dreamed about you last night. We were in the apartment in Dresden, pressed against a wall, kissing. It was the night I made a surprise flight to visit you, remember? I often wonder if this won't be the happiest moment of my life – if everything after this isn't just a weakening echo of the joy we shared in those precious moments in the spring.

I woke up when I saw you leaving the apartment in Frankfurt, what had been us was gone, and I collapsed against the wall, empty and lost.

I can only cry when I look at it, but the print – The Nostalgia of the Infinite – you sent me is truly beautiful. Even my mother loves it, she showed it to all her friends at last Sunday's dinner – if only she knew it was from you, maybe she would burn it...

She's getting older and so am I. I look at my hands – you always teased me how short and stubby they were, I'm sure you remember – and I start to see my mother's. You'll never forgive me for how you struggled when you first met her – I should have prepared you more for the hand kissing and everything else, I know, but you kissed my hand so beautifully so many times and now my hands are hers, so in a way it was always perfect.

I often think about the time we spent together in those apartments. The poems you would write for me on the balcony window when it would steam over cooking together in the winter, the magnolia trees in

the park in the spring, the smell of the nearby orchards and farms in the summer, the simple days of laughter and love and their evenings spent together on the balcony with wine...

Why is there this connection to you that I cannot explain? Why? Sometimes there is no answer, sometimes it's unexplainable what you feel, live and decide. No matter how much you pull yourself away from me, there will always be a prince from Pluto in my life. No matter what happens. That's why... Please take care of yourself and be happy.

#2

It can't be an accident that you wrote to me in the same night that I dreamed about you.

My heart is with you and you know that – I've told you before that there is an inexplicable connection between us. A single letter from you can put me in a condition that brings me to the edge of my reason.

If you had only accepted the child, you would still be here with me. But even then, I knew that I couldn't do that to you. It was too much to ask that you accept the child from another man.

I also saw the email from your father where he wrote that you shouldn't marry me because of the age and culture difference. I could understand why he didn't want me – and I accepted that I had to let you go.

That's all in the past now, but I was with you every day during all the time you've avoided me. When I think about us, a sadness seeps in, I cry and memories awaken. The spring was especially hard this year. Every smell, every ray of sun, every plant and every animal were filled with you.

The father of my child is a typical man from my country. He's a good person, but we just don't match each other. There aren't any subjects that we can share, that interest us both. It's different.

Sometimes it's as if I had wanted to do my mother a favor. It's as if I'd wanted to make her happy with a son in law from our country. I didn't realize that in doing so I would also make myself unhappy.

The girls you will surely meet – the girls who will fall in love with you – can count themselves lucky as they will have met a truly special person. I was also lucky, till I destroyed it with the thought that I didn't deserve such happiness.

I still hold out hope that fate will lead you back to me. Maybe you will be married by then, have children, or be on a world tour – I don't know, but my heart is yours and always will be.

No matter what you do, or where you go... please think about your family. You should visit them. Your mother surely misses you.

I know that you didn't want me to contact you again – I'll never forget the moment you told me that when you were here for the last time – but I couldn't help it. I know it's too much to ask, but my greatest wish is for you to be well and for you to mail me here and there and tell me as much (as short as you wish... just a few lines is enough for me)

I'm sorry, but I needed to talk to you. I'm sorry that I tried to contact you... I'm so sorry...

#3

I'm sorry for writing to you again, it's another dream's fault... I dream about you a lot these days. In my dreams I'm not pregnant and I decide again and again for us. When I wake up I always have a soft smile on my face, until I feel the child I'm carrying and realize that I regret it. I wanted to have this child at any price, but I didn't realize that I would have to pay with losing you forever.

It's was so difficult without you and it's still difficult. I look for letters from you every damn, single day, for any small piece of news from you. Nothing... and nothing again. I know I don't deserve anything else. Eventually I thought that I should just leave you in peace, let you find another, fall in love again, somehow continue with your life...

I know that you were still in contact with some of our friends although they never told me anything and I could never bring myself to ask directly. That was my only connection left to you and it gave me the inner peace I needed. But you've stopped even that now – I'm sorry I know, but I do. They all love you, don't give up on them only because you've given up on me.

Can't you tell me where you are now? I wouldn't be able to bear it if anything were to happen to you. You were my best friend, my constant strength in life, my peace, and my love. I stand not only alone now but am even pregnant. I love this child, that's certain, but it's not enough for me.

I miss you so much, an embrace, a conversation, a smile... sometimes I think it was karma that God punished me for not appreciating the happiness we had together.

I think about you every day... every damn, single day... some days I'm sure that I will see you again, that we'll become one again, that we'll be happy again. Now I'm not happy... but life goes on and I'll be a mother soon.

I'll never marry. Even if my mother and society expect it from me. I only ever wanted to marry you.... I'll understand if you do one day and start a family with another woman. I can only live for this child inside of me now, and I will try to be a good mother.

Please take care my life... (Yes, you are my life. I finally realized this after the thought that you might not be doing well, that I might never see you again, caused me such unbearable pain...)

It's been one year... but it seems like an eternity to me.... I'm waiting, my love... I'm waiting for the day that I'll see you again.... and I know that.... that this day won't be long at all...

In Love,

Y.

*"I apologize to the rain
 For the tears I cried for you
 I'll take the rose petals I dried
 And for your sake leave
 If a fairy enters your dream
 Say the rose beauty is dead, she lost her talisman"*

He reached into his desk and took out his drawing supplies, leafing absently through his paltry portfolio, finally settling on a few drawings of a face. The different parts were isolated, but it was always the same face. A blushing mouth in white charcoal; long, gleaming graphite hair; a disembodied pair of half parted, pastel lips.

He couldn't help but linger on the reference photograph. It was a picture of a beautiful woman in her thirties with a round face and a terrifically warm smile. It was from a past New Years with signs for it everywhere in the background. Her flowing black hair was buried beneath a snow touched scarf and knitted beret, but her smile would convince anyone it was the middle of summer. Next to the picture there were two hand copied stanzas from two different poems, both written in the local language.

"They ask about you... did he die, if not should I say he'll return? Both cases are impossible, aren't they? Because I know you will never return and you know; for me you will never die!"

*This dewdrop world --
 Is a dewdrop world,
 And yet, and yet . . .*

He suddenly grew dissatisfied with his work and set the sketchbook down and poured another

drink from the desultory collection of bottles underneath the desk. He reached for a notebook with filled pages of writing and violently gripped a pen. Feverishly, he ripped a blank page off from the notebook and quickly penned his thoughts.

I'm writing to you now because I love you.

I want to tell you that nothing else matters, that we were decided for each other the moment I looked into your eyes that early morning in the airport cafe all those years ago.

I only live now to dry the tears from your face that I see every night in my dreams, to hold you again in our last kiss and never let you go. I'm drunk now, barely alive and beyond thought in a country that isn't my home and still I love you!

In this dreamless sleep we call life, I'll begin a thousand times again, I'll smoke a thousand cigarettes again, I'll be drunk a thousand times again, I'll love a thousand more people, I'll kill myself a thousand more times. But after all that, I'll be here again and still I'll love you!

He looked at his poorly written script, its pathetic penmanship and maudlin discontent, and viewed it with remorse as he had done many times throughout the year. He paused, then took another piece of paper out and calmly started to write:

I was daydreaming today and realized your baby will probably be here soon.

Some days my mind is locked in English. It can hear a thousand different beautiful sounds in this city, but sometimes it just wants English. I think you're like English for me. Maybe it's just a bad habit made over the years, like wanting a cigarette with your coffee or wine. I don't know, but I'm sorry for my last letter, I was drunk when I wrote it, but this is how it is now, and I'm sure how it will be again.

I was just lying with a girl, this small, innocent thing. I think she's fallen in love with me, calls me all the sweet words you used to call me. She asked me to come away with her to France on my birthday.

Why must my birthday be an anniversary of pain?

Tonight I was told to make a wish... with a sad smile, I realized I couldn't remember wishing for anything before you.

They say wishes won't come true if you tell them to someone, but mine already haven't come true, so I guess it's safe to tell you.

*If it was from a fallen eyelash or throwing money into a fountain, I would always say the same thing:
"Let Y and I be happy."*

This letter is a dead thing, all its little words will live and die with you reading them, extinguishing with the reaction in your heart, they'll mean nothing in the morning, I know this, and yet, and yet...

Time passes for us all. How long must something hurt until it can be said that it won't heal, that it's permanent? The shadow of the permanent, the influence of the past, darkens all our lives. But even that has an end. Even the forgotten will forget. And if they don't or won't or can't, they must remain dispassionately removed, ready to start anew.

The morning call to prayer is being sung; it's time for me to go. I wish you all the happiness in this dewdrop world. There is a place out beyond all this and it's there that I will always remember, and always forget, Hazelnuts in Chinese.

The emptiness of the street was exactly as it was every morning. The summer sun rising above the building across the street warmed him as it had the Saturday before.

THE END