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An Excerpt from London Life 2021

In winter, windy days are made of steel; they have metallic taste and sharp edges. Today when trudging across the bridge I got stopped twice. I was then caught by obscure pathos. Surely far from sorrow, but it lifted some weight of myself as it offloaded my belongingness. I love this place, actually. This city of dream, of youth and history, of sweet solitude and wildness. Often I even feel a bit reluctant to think about the departure. Rush the sentiments. I envision — some mornings in some years later I would think of this place, this period of time — and they just tear me softly and daily. It happens already while I'm still here. It reminds me like an old lover's hand, from a palm to fingertips. A heart so easily summoned by details. Last winter I also spent quite a lot of time trolling a city. Different than aimless wandering, I always had a destination set for myself every time out. Now I still do. But back then, whenever I arrived I felt at ease. Each walk was taken as a short journey and the arrival as a secret achievement. and when I returned home (just generally where I lived) there would be someone keeping me company. Even more often they were not waiting for me. They'd be back after me. Now I'm stepping upon a road of cobblestone to hop back home, but it is of no difference at all whether I'm on the road or at home. So no matter whereabouts, I am lingering in no one's land. I didn't expect this. I walked on the bridge, above the turbid river. I thought, 'OK. It is not that cold.' It is just the short breath of life, the dullness of the sky. Oh, the winter. I believe winters in Nanjing or Shanghai are even severer. I remember the cold vividly, solid and harsh. This place is just fine. It rains a lot (in the tumult of wind for sure). — But I just could not tolerate this cold any longer. I was on the bridge; my eyesight was covered. The black umbrella I was holding at that moment aimed to be against the wind rather than rain like a believer being led astray. I supposed I needed to hurry back. Otherwise, this river would pull me apart clockwise.

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