



Issue 24

(August 2020)

MATRIX

SHATIN PUI YING POST

Embrace the seasons
and cycles of your life.

There is magic in

CHANGE

Bronnie Ware



EDITOR'S NOTE

In this belated issue of Matrix, students have created their original works centred around the theme of 'season'. Amid the Covid-19 pandemic, we experienced uncertainties and sometimes, fear. We hope that you will find solace in reading the beautiful poem and articles written by our aspiring writers.



“

However much the world changes, there are some things that remain the same.

Namely, spring will arrive and buds will sprout, and then autumn will descend and the leaves will fall. In other words, things will take their natural course.

With an open mind, notice the truth in the everyday. This awareness will give us the courage we need to go on living.

- "The Art of Simple Living", Shunmyo Masuno

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A FRUIT POEM

ARIEL CHUNG [4D]

Sweet and delicious

Taste like sugar

Ripe

And my aroma appreciated

White seeds on my skin

Bright red in colour

Enchanted with my taste and smell

Rich as caramel

Rubicund* me

I always come with desserts

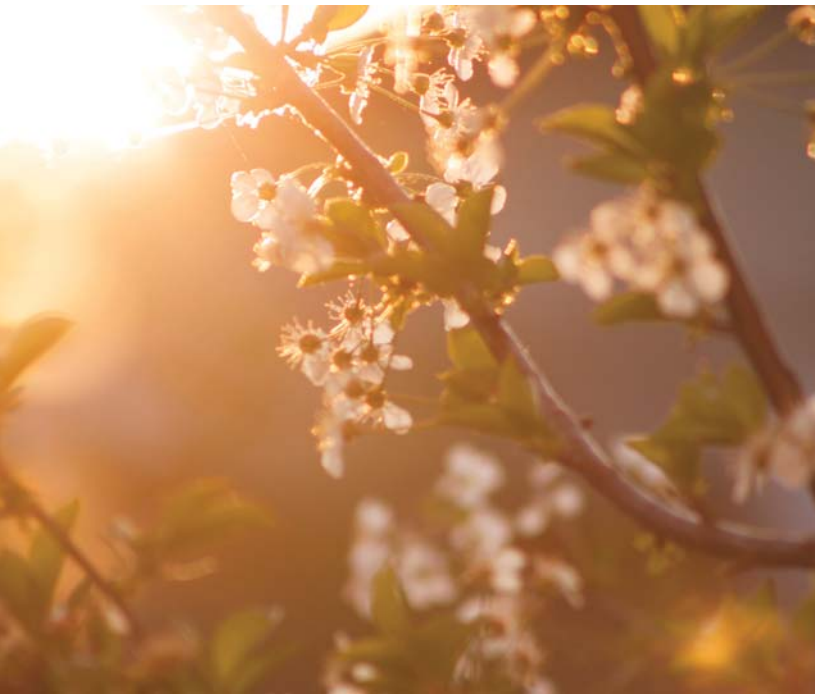
Eat me with glee

Spring marks my birth



Rubicund (adj.)

(of a person's face) having a healthy red colour



The Spring Feast

PAULINE YAU (4D)

Every spring, my grandfather comes over to our home and makes a sumptuous dinner for us. My aunt's family join us too and we gather around to fill our stomachs and chat heartily.

This year, spring came early. Flowers blossomed without the timid trail of waiting. The weather went humid overnight and there was morning dew on the railings of our balcony. All of these little unremarkable details reminded me that my dear grandfather was coming!

Indeed, grandfather appeared on our door front a few days later. However, we heard his coughs before we saw his familiar face. Heavy coughs echoed the corridors as he walked slowly towards my father, who opened the door to welcome him. My grandfather had five layers of clothes on him: a fuzzy green cardigan on the surface with only his neck not covered. He was sweating because of the humid weather. He was pushing a noisy and clumsy trolley which was filled with fresh ingredients for dinner. That day, he also brought a few budding flowers



and asked me to put them into a vase. 'Feel the spring air!' he said with glee. Having come in, he quickly removed three layers of his clothes and enjoyed the warmth in our house that came with the early spring.

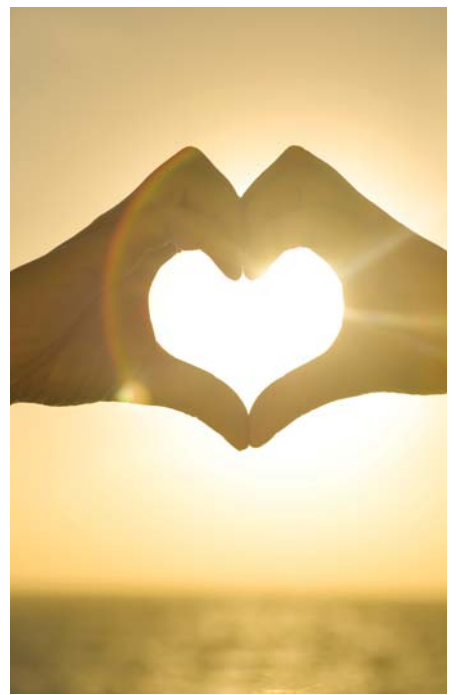
Despite being rested, grandfather's agonizing cough didn't stop. The chirp of birds was accompanied by his rusty coughs and each one startled me, both because it was very loud, and because I was worried about his deteriorating health. Nevertheless, he carried on cooking for us and my parents didn't even bother to convince him not to. Everyone knows that he is known to be the most stubborn person on earth.

That afternoon he coughed a lot more than he spoke, though he had never been a talkative person. His actions and expressions always speak much more than words. I used to observe his swift actions, like pouring the sauce into the wok, chopping vegetables without an inch of error that would cut his fingers. Each spring, I find another lovely detail while observing him preparing for the spring feast.



While he was chopping the pork and grinding the garlic, the coughs didn't stop. It was almost amusing to see him clumsily covering his mouth when he coughed, washing his hands afterwards and picking up the knife only to put it down to cough again. Of course smile didn't appear on my face. I recalled that in the many springs before, he had been a professional chef cooking swiftly without a groan or a moan, a chef who had been capable and full of strength and energy. Sadly, now he isn't.

As the afternoon sun shone in our living room, grandfather came out from the kitchen and took off yet another layer of his clothes to enjoy the cozy weather. It's everyone's favourite weather: not so hot that you'll sweat but not too chilly that you'll have to grab a sweater. Grandfather sat still on the couch, and gradually falling into a peaceful slumber. When my aunt's family arrived, they had to tip-toe in order not to wake him. We all enjoyed sneaking around just to make sure he didn't get disturbed and could continue his deep afternoon nap.



A few hours later, the sun slowly set and temperature dropped. Grandfather grabbed his jacket and put it on and headed back to the kitchen. Slowly, he put all the dishes on the dining table while everyone was chattering happily. It seemed to me that no one really cared whether the dishes were as appetizing as they were before. Nobody was as worried as me about grandfather's ceaseless coughs.

But soon I realised that it wasn't indifference or taking it for granted. It was because spring after spring, grandfather has been cooking for us, and this has long become a family tradition. Therefore no matter what happens, this will go on and on. It was when I realised spring only happens once a year and that I should cherish it before the blazing summer takes over.



MATCHING

- | | |
|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> cherish | 1: expensive |
| <input type="checkbox"/> glee | 2: with pleasure & enthusiasm |
| <input type="checkbox"/> heartily | 3: shy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> chatter | 4: ordinary (with nothing unusual) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> sumptuous | 5: growing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> timid | 6: happiness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> slumber | 7: very painful/extreme |
| <input type="checkbox"/> deteriorating | 8: worsening |
| <input type="checkbox"/> appetizing | 9: deep, long sound of suffering |
| <input type="checkbox"/> groan | 10: sleep |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ceaseless | 11: talk |
| <input type="checkbox"/> budding | 12: delicious-looking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> unremarkable | 13: never-ending |
| <input type="checkbox"/> blazing | 14: understood/made real/achieved |
| <input type="checkbox"/> realised | 15: keep a pleasant feeling in one's mind |
| <input type="checkbox"/> agonizing | 16: burning |

Answers: 15, 6, 2, 11, 1, 3, 10, 8, 12, 9, 13, 5, 4, 16, 14, 7



LUNAR NEW YEAR

Evelyn Fong (5C)

"Evelyn, let's go shopping for the Lunar New Year with me," mom said. It reminded me that the Lunar New Year is approaching. To me, it is such an annoying festival because to me, it's time-consuming to buy presents and visit different relatives.

At this time of the year, I am in the dumps due to my busy schedules. Different deadlines and my desire to achieve perfection filled me with frustration and disappointment. Am I being too harsh to myself? Negative emotions have taken away my interest in things other than my work.

I remember that things were not like this when I was a kid. I used to be ecstatic about the coming of this festive season. My uncle gives me a box of butter cookies every year as he knows I love eating them a lot. I used to feel delighted. To prevent them from being taken away by my mom, I opened the tin and shared the cookies with my cousins immediately upon receiving them. Once my aunt asked me what she should buy my grandma for new year, I told her to buy cookies. Why? It was because I knew that my grandma would give them to me eventually.

As part of the tradition of our family, we pay a visit to my great-grandparents' mansion every Lunar New Year. When I was younger, I used to play with my cousins joyfully and hide-and-seek was our favourite game. My cousin, Audrey and I



liked hiding in the little room on the fourth floor, which we called the "Corner Tower". It was a small and inconspicuous place perfect for sharing secrets and confiding in each other.

I also enjoyed chatting with other adult relatives. To me, the house was full of love and bliss.

However, happiness fades over time. Everything happened regularly as clockwork in the past few years. My uncle continued to give me cookies but I no longer felt euphoric and I still went to the mansion to visit my great-grandparents. Yet, I spent most of the time on my phone instead.

This year, while tapping on my phone, I bumped into an old photo taken when I was six. In the picture, I am hugging my grandma with a broad smile on my face. But now, I feel oddly distant from her.

A gap has slowly developed between me, my parents and relatives without me realizing it. Fully occupied by my studies and troubled by negative emotions, sadly, it has been difficult for me to spare time to bond with my family.

Spring is approaching; leaves start to sprout and flowers are blooming. I am determined to give myself a chance to reboot and reconnect with my family to mark a brand-new start.

MATCHING

- | | |
|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> euphoric | 1: extremely happy or excited |
| <input type="checkbox"/> sprout | 2: almost hidden |
| <input type="checkbox"/> confiding | 3: trusting (with secrets) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ecstatic | 4: delighted |
| <input type="checkbox"/> inconspicuous | 5: grow |

Answers: 1, 5, 3, 4, 2



April Showers Bring May Flowers

Alvin Tang (5B)

Our second school term has come to an end amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Obviously, lots of us are frustrated because of the chaos and inconvenience brought by class suspension and social distancing measures. We are unable to enjoy our holidays and leisure activities as usual though the long-awaited summertime has arrived. During this time of hardship, however, we should remember that 'April showers bring May flowers'. Adversity is always followed by good fortune despite the fact that we may feel hopeless sometimes.

In recent months, we have been staying at home for most of the time. Extra self-motivation and determination are required to keep our studies in progress. As a passionate learner, I thought studying at home would not be very different from having lessons at school. Notwithstanding my comprehensive schedule and clear study goals, I had become less and less motivated.



Uncertainties about the future and lack of social life have filled my life with frustration. I once fell into despair worrying that my plans for university application would be seriously disrupted.

Seasons have changed; the summer vacation has finally begun and hopefully the pandemic will soon be over. At this moment, we should hold on to the belief that hardships often come before we reap the rewards. Spring is full of unpleasant rainy days, which bring us much inconvenience. Nevertheless, without the rainy days, we would not be able to experience the beautiful and vibrant summer. Likewise, we often procrastinate due to the fear of failure and uncertain prospects. Yet, we have to understand that adversities strengthen our abilities, like spring rain nurturing lives, flowers will eventually bloom and good things will come at last.

During this difficult time, many students, especially those who will sit public examinations soon, suffer tremendous pressure. We might be at a loss when making choices about further studies and future career. If you are confused and stressed like me, you are not alone. We all dislike repetitive examination practices



and endless revision sessions but diligence is likely to be the fairest opportunity for us to succeed. We should remember that challenges in our adolescence toughen us up and build up resilience. They provide us with the essential pathways to a fulfilling life and mental well-being in future.

Despite the hurdles we are facing now, take good care of your mind and emotions while getting well-prepared for challenges. We only die once but we live every day.

We may perhaps start to reflect on what we have gained and will gain in the current unpleasant situations. Keep in mind the saying 'April showers bring May flowers'. You will then discover that an abundance of blossoming flowers are just around the corner.



MY IDEAL SUMMER DAY

Kylie Hon (4D)

Summer may drive people crazy with its unbearable scorching heat. However for me, summer is a season which is full of excitement, at the same time very relaxing. My ideal summer day should be spent at a stunning beach, with scoops of ice cream and of course, some refreshing and luscious fruits, as well as a tranquil summer night.

To me, an ideal summer day should not start very early. I will wake up after a sweet dream and enough rest. After having a fulfilling breakfast, I will head to a sandy beach immediately.

On this perfect summer day, this ideal beach of mine is pollution-free. It is a boundless sea and its waves rise and fall rhythmically, giving pleasing echoes to my ears. I will wade into the seawater, and let it gently wet my feet. When I look far beyond the sea, there is only azure seawater stretching to the horizon. When I look down at my bare feet, I can see small fish swimming around them in the crystal-clear seawater. I will then dive into the sea to refresh myself, swimming with the lovely fish and adoring the beauty of colorful corals. I wish to spend half of my perfect summer day appreciating God's greatest creation - the infinite ocean - at this breathtaking beach.

Ice cream is also indispensable to my ideal summer day. After enjoying the sea, I will have scoops and scoops of mouth-watering ice cream. Ice cream of different flavours is irreplaceable as always: the toothsome chocolate chips, red and sweet frozen strawberries and the mild bitterness of green tea mixed with silky smooth ice cream. They all contribute to embellishing my dreamy summer day.

After playing hard on this special day, I will enjoy luscious fruits after dinner. Watermelons, melons, mangoes... they are all wonderfully refreshing. I will smash them and mix them well with milk in a blender to bring some chilly sensation to my tongue in this scorching season.

Last but not the least, I would like to end this idyllic summer day by listening to the songs of nature. When I step out of my home, I long to see a clear sky with twinkling stars and the silvery moon. After the sun has slowly set, I will enjoy the cool summer breeze. Leaves will rustle as the tender breeze greets them, holding a night concert for me and singing a sweet lullaby to put me to sleep.

Some people may hate the heat of summer. They would rather stay indoors, playing PC games and enjoy air-conditioning. However, summer for me is a season which allows me to get to know more about nature. This amazing season gives me chances to interact with nature - from swimming in the unbounded ocean to listening to the pleasant music nature presents to me. The blazing summer is somehow unbearable, yet the ice cream and fruits are certainly wonderful blessings, which bring me the much-needed freshness and coolness.

Summer is a time to enjoy! Put down your phone and turn off the air-con now to revel in a perfect summer day! Do you hear the summer calling?





THE FALLEN LEAVES

JOYCE WONG (4D)

THE FALLEN LEAVES

JOYCE WONG (4D)

Dear Sage,

I remember. I could never forget the day we met. The falling white contrasted against your raven hair, glistening crystals on a sea of onyx. Your face was just as cold as the freezing weather, perhaps even colder. And me, being my fearless self, approached you with little care for my pride. Your razor sharp tongue almost cut through my defence, and yet, I was unwilling to back down.

"Hey stranger," I greeted you with an easy smile, the opposite of the sneer playing on your lips. "You look like you need some company."

I watched in amusement as your sneer changed to a scowl in an instant. Wrapping yourself tighter into the safety of your large black coat, you scanned me with your blazing glare. I plastered on my award-winning smile, hoping that I would appear approachable.

I knew a wounded animal when I saw one, easily recognized by my broken self. My yearning to mend the shattered soul was almost as strong as my desire to cover up the broken pieces. If I could not fix myself, I thought, perhaps I could fix someone else. Little did I know, by trying to mend you, I mended myself.

The silence was overwhelming, even worse in the cold. My steaming coffee was offered to you. My freezing hands only felt colder as you glared directly into my eyes. Not a word and I already felt as though I was your servant, submitting to you.

"Making it sound like you are not seeking company, don't you, mister?" you said, like the sharp blade of a knife. I shivered. As much as I would like to say yes,



my pride held me back. I didn't answer you then. You continued, "I do not need any company. You would see this if you had a pair of working eyes."

Ignoring your cutting words, I took a seat beside you. The smell of sanitizer and coffee mixed together as we sat there in silence.

And this was how we met.

II

"Hey," I greeted you with the same smile as always. I brushed the fallen leaves away from the stone seat, passing your favourite - tea with a dash of milk - to you and sitting down next to you.

I couldn't help but look at you as you sipped from the steaming cup. The way you held your cup was exactly like the way you held yourself - elegantly. Elegantly looking down on people you disdained. I could still clearly remember your narrowing eyes as you held your head up high, looking down on the woman who questioned about your hair. The one thing I wish I could have, but never would. I never dared to stand up for myself, but you did, no matter what.

Spring breeze blew gently as we sat there with nothing but the company of each other. I had never thought that we would be comfortable with each other. The silence was never awkward. It was calming and soothing.

I enjoyed the conversations with you, who understood my passion for Chemistry. We discussed the newest researches and debated our discoveries. I admired the way you stood firmly on your ground, believing that you were never wrong.



Every single day, I discovered new admirations for you - the way you walked, the way you talked, the way you stood. Every little thing made you special. Yes, I was falling for you, wondering if you would be there to catch me before I crashed onto the ground.

III

My thoughts wandered, dipping lightly on our memories, jumping from one to another. Birds chirped and I couldn't help but notice that my mind had been circling around that particular episode for minutes.

Feeling courageous, and ready to lose a limb, I mustered up my courage and put my hands over yours. Questioning onyx eyes locked on mine. The sudden nervousness took me by surprise. Finally I got your attention and all I needed to do was to ask.

Before I knew it, the words spewed out of my mouth. I was biting my lips nervously, preparing for the rejection that I knew was coming.

"You've got two left feet and still decided to ask me to dance with you?" you said with a smirk, raising a slender eyebrow at me. To my surprise, you pulled me up. You must be delirious, agreeing to my request without a thought.

Standing face to face, I noticed that you were half a head taller than me. Even with your IV stand trailing behind you, you were a picture of grace. Thin hair masked your pale face, covering up your rare smile. I pushed a few strands of your hair back, admiring the lifted corners of your lips, reserved just for me.

I should have known that dancing was a bad choice. A scowl appeared on your face the moment I accidentally stepped on your foot. I grinned apologetically and stood up straighter, constantly reminding myself to watch my steps. But it was all for nothing when I



tripped over my right leg. I would have fallen face first on the ground if you hadn't caught me in time. Admitting my defeat, I gave up trying to lead and followed your steps.

A swing and a dip. Your moves were like a piece of art, smooth and elegant. At that moment, I couldn't help but let affection wash over me. Lost in the moment, I almost forgot the IV stand behind you; I almost forgot the black strands that I accidentally pulled off.

We danced under the blazing sun until we were both drenched in sweat. Breathless, I helped you onto the bench and sat down next to you. Finally having the upper hand, the corners of my lips lifted in a smirk.

"It's hot for me. What about you?" I teased. You scowled and turned your face away. I laughed with my heart running like a hart, not knowing if it was due to the dance, or the teasing.

IV

Fingers linked together, we softly whispered nothingness. It all started on that day.

"And this is what makes you a good wife," I nudged you with a teasing smile. The shade of crimson was lovely against your pale face. Homemade spaghetti, glistening champagne... only a few burning candles were missing. "It's rather romantic, isn't it?" I laughingly said. "Well, I don't have time to be your perfect wife forever," you snapped, crossing your arms.

"I have more important things to do," you said curling your lips in disdain.



"Oh, like what? Saving the world?" I raised my eyebrows with a fake awe. Cupping my head over my heart, I gasped in pain with a smile. "My oh-so-mighty heroine, please save me from heartbreak."

Your face betrayed nothing. The only sign of your mischief was the twinkling of your eyes. You leaned in with lips almost touching my ears. As soft as the cool breeze around us, you whispered, "I'll always catch you before you hit the ground."


Our eyes met for a second and I lowered mine in submission. "Whatever you want, I'll do it for you."

V

"I like you," I whispered softly, fingering through your long raven hair that you refused to tie up. You would not be bound again you said. Wind messing up your perfectly made hair, the black coat that you refused to take off shielded you from the elements of the world.

Everything was silent for what seemed like an eternity. For a moment, I feared that I had crossed the line and you had retreated to your shell. These three words were nothing like the casual teases that we made previously. No. It was the three words that could change everything.

"Sage, talk to me." I pleaded, clasping your hand in mine. You were hiding behind a shield, daring anyone to enter. I understood for I was too afraid of letting anyone enter, fearing that they would leave once they saw the pieces that they had to mend. Before saying those three words, it was just a harmless fling, nothing too deep.



"No. Whatever this is, it is over now." you snapped, withdrawing your hand from my grasp. "I have known you for almost a year now. There is a distance we can't overcome." The proud and elegant Sage that I liked so much was gone, replaced by the wounded animal that was in you all along.

"Sage, please..." I didn't dare to touch you again, fearing that you would retreat further. But you had already stood up, so abruptly that you staggered. I put a hand on your elbow to still you but you pushed it away. "No," you glared and said, "don't touch me."

You took a step, then two. You were looking straight on the fallen leaves on the ground, not once looking back.

Then on the seventh step, you looked back.

"I do not wish to bind you to a dying woman," you whispered. The wind carried your words gently to my ears.

VI

You were shaking as you wept. I wanted to pull you into an embrace, to tell you that it was alright, but I hesitated.

You had been building a wall around yourself while I was trying hard to tear it down. You held your secrets deep down inside a black pit. Anyone who dared to take a step and dived down would never have a way out again. That was probably why no one cared enough to share that burden with you.

But I was willing to fall into the pit with you only if you would let me. You could have my ears, my attention.



Taking a deep breath, I plucked up my courage and put a hand on your shoulder, muttering that everything would be alright.

Miraculously, you slowly lifted your head, fixing your gaze on the blooming flowers ahead. I watched as a million emotions and thoughts flashed across your face.

You spit out everything that you tried to hold back and I was honoured to be the first one to hear it. Word after word, your sorrow flowed out and together we shared the weight.

You told me that a colleague, not even a friend, took your faith and stomped on it. He forced you to make promises built on a long dead friend.

"Spy for me", he said and you obeyed. "Lie for me", he said and you did as told.

It must be devastating for you to know that you were just a pawn in his game of chess. I told you I understood, but deep down I knew what I had gone through was nothing, comparing to yours.

Yes, I was betrayed before but I got friends supporting me faithfully while you got no one. I saw it in your eyes: your desire for approval and your longing for acceptance.

Though we didn't have much time, I still wished to know everything about you - the affectionate side, the proud side, even the broken side. I knew your present and then your past. All it was left was your future. We could sculpt our future together if only we had the time.

VII

I marked the days when we parted. I heard about it from your colleagues because you would never tell me. I tried asking but every time, your answer would be 'not long'.



You said you were leaving. “To where?” I asked. And you said you didn’t know. I never wanted to let you go but it was a relief to know that you could finally move on.

The sun shone, flowers bloomed and leaves were greener than ever. It was the prettiest season of the year. It seemed like even the Earth wanted to show its best to you before you left. The Earth was begging you, like me, to stay but you finally decided to leave everything behind.

My life has been filled with a suffocating silence since then. Without you, there are only white noises in my mind. I miss your every word and move. Only if I could give up everything and go with you.

It has been seven seasons since you left, and I was still waiting for you to return my heart. But I know that you never will. The Sage-shaped hole will always be there in my heart.

Love,
Harris

MATRIX ISSUE 24

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