

《我在中国 1970 年》英文翻译

Me in 1970 (Translated)

Author's Note: In China during the cultural revolution (1966-1976), "educated youths" (知青) were sent from their homes in cities to rural areas to undergo re-education. The children sent were normally children of doctors, dentists, professors and other high ranking professions. In the countryside, educated youths didn't have access to books, education, or anything that would connect them to their former lives. This story was written from the perspective of an educated youth during the time of the cultural revolution.

When I wake up, my whole body was damp. Every day since coming to the countryside has been like this. I live in a small hut, and because of the humid climate and the fact that the door is always open, all my things have gotten moldy. It's October now, and the weather has begun to get cold. The change in weather has given us all a little more energy because we spend all day toiling outside. The summertime heat is brutal. When we work, we talk about life back in the city. I used to constantly complain about the stress of school, but now I've started to miss life then. We can't read here, just tell stories. My dad was a doctor, so I normally tell the other educated youths stories from his work.

My stature has changed since coming to the countryside. I used to be a good, rule-following teenager. I was always smaller than my classmates so I was picked on. I didn't dare stand up to them, I would just grit my teeth and tolerate their jeers. After being here for a year though, I've developed into a man. I've gotten stronger; my originally gangly arms are now thick with muscle. I'm more confident now and would stand up to them without thinking.

Here, we spend our days picking fruit, feeding the cattle, herding the animals. It bores me to the point of exhaustion. Every day is just like the other, and I have already slipped into an depressed state. The problem isn't how boring the tasks are, it's the fact that my life doesn't have any clear purpose. I don't dream anymore, I don't remember any dreams when I wake. It didn't used to be like this. Now, the only thing I really want is to go home. Yesterday, when we were feeding the horses, we started talking about my favorite book. I thought about the first time I read the book in Middle School, when I thought reading was a hassle. Now, reading brings me comfort. I can picture myself in my room back home, sitting on the floor, my arms hugging my knees, book in hand. My eyes would narrow whenever I came to an interesting part, my gaze never leaving the pages of the book.

But now there are no books. This is what makes me miss my old life most.