

# Impressions

—Yi Huang

*clinkiti-clinkiti-clinkiti-clink*

Walking past the loosely-fenced building site, you hear melodious metallic notes amidst the silence made by all the construction work that isn't happening. Mesmerised by the tune, you completely fail to notice the greasy-looking contractors smugly grinning at a job well done—of observing the time-honoured tradition of waking the entire neighbourhood. This is not, of course, because contractors are cruel by nature, but because they've had decades to evolve a sort of systematic cunning—by waking up everyone with their jackhammering, any complaint to the council would now stand as evidence that they were, in fact, doing their job.

Entranced by the melody gliding through the air, you enter the construction site and proceed through a labyrinth of supposedly modern-looking building materials reeking of distilled corporate 'synergy'. Your quest ends at what appears to be the site office, and seeing the door open with no one inside, you decide to explore further. Although the room itself is far from majestic, it somehow radiates the ambience of a carefully-stored sepia-tinted photograph.

The music is louder now, the tinny notes definitely familiar, but try as you might, you just can't recognise it. Playing a game of Marco Polo against the it, you eventually come across an antique music box hidden among some children's toys in a corner. Picking it up and wiping away the dust with your sleeve, you uncover the once-bright copper surface underneath the muck. Feeling around, you hear the faintest of clicks, and the top of the box opens to reveal a yellowed, tattered letter written in a superbly stylish hand.

*clinkiti-clinkiti-clinkiti-clink*

As the final delicate notes melt away, you slowly emerge from your trance. Still standing near the corner of the room, you stare at the congregation of soft toys at your feet. Their glassy and beady eyes seem to project a look of child-like innocence masking a layer of poorly-feigned ignorance.

Ma chère,

These visions I bestow upon you as eternal gifts.

The first vision: DGAP

I saw a woman dressed in white, her face contorted as she reads a latin dictionary of sorts.

The second vision: JL

I saw your friend Jimbo holding an infant, his face contorted as he attempts to sing the child to sleep.

The third vision: SFTD

I saw a man play the banjo under a moon-lit balcony, his face contorted as he discourses his love to a life-sized Barbie in falsetto.

The fourth vision: TSID

I saw the anthropomorphic personification of the snow descend from the sky, her metaphorical face contorted as she pirouettes through the air in crystal slippers.

The fifth vision: TLS

I saw a five inch man guard his sheep, his face contorted as he considers his future career opportunities.

The sixth vision: GC

I saw two small black rag-dolls, their faces contorted as they produce a satirical dance, and all in the name of cake.

Avec amour,

Papa