

## Rewi Alley Fellowship 2019

### Application Form

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Date of Birth	March 7, 1973
Phone:	+86 13901995058
Email:	<a href="mailto:sunweewriter@qq.com">sunweewriter@qq.com</a>
Current employment:	Professional Writer working with Shanghai Writers' Association
Previous grants, literary awards, fellowships:	<p><b>Literary Awards</b></p> <p>2018            <b>Excellence Award Winner for Novella</b> Beijing Literature Excellence Awards for Literature Works by "Beijing Literature"</p> <p>2016            <b>Novella Award Winner</b> Chinese Writers' Erdos National Literature Award by "Chinese Writers"</p> <p>2013            <b>Excellence Award Winner for Novel</b> Chinese Writers' Erdos National Literature Award by "Chinese Writers"</p>

Previous grants, literary awards, fellowships:	2005	<b>The First Prize Winner</b> National Literature Writing Competition by “Shanghai Writers”
	<b>Grants and Fellowships</b>	
	2018	Writers in Residence program at the Château de Lavigny Writers’ Residence, Lavigny, Switzerland – 2018 Writer in Residence, Grant Recipient Writers in Residence program at Baltic Centre for Writers and Translators, Sweden- Writer in Residence, Grant Recipient Writer in Residence program at AIR Literature Västra Götaland, Stömstad, Sweden-Scholar holder, Grant Recipient
	2017	Writers in Residence program at Franz Edelmaier Residence for Literature and Human Rights by SGEMKO, Merano, Italy- 2017 Writer in Residence, Grant Recipient
	2016	Fellowship at the Hawthornden International Retreat for Writers, Scotland, UK- Writer in Residence for 2016, Fellowship Recipient Pécs Writers Program, Pécs, Hungary- Writer in Residence for 2016, Scholarship Recipient
2015	Writers in Residence program at Ventspils International Writers’ and Translators’ House, Ventspils, Latvia- Writer in Residence, Scholarship Recipient	

Previous grants, literary awards, fellowships:	2014	H.A.L.D. 2014 program [Housing Authors & Literature, Denmark] at the International Summer Residency for Writers, Denmark- Writer in Residence for 2014, Fellowship Recipient 2014 Cork International Short Story Festival, Ireland- Invitee Limerick Visiting Writer Program during the City of Culture year in 2014, Ireland- Visiting Writer, Grant Recipient
	2013	Writers in Residence program at Baltic Centre for Writers and Translators, Sweden- Writer in Residence
	2012	“Life of Discovery” project, International Writing Program at the University of Iowa, USA- Visiting Writer
	2011	Writers in Residence program in Cork & 2011 Cork International Short Story Festival, Ireland- Writer in Residence for 2011
Working title of your project:	Mirror	
Genre of this project:	Short Story Collection	
Do you have a regular publisher?	Hunan Literature and Art Publishing House	
Qualifications/evidence of English language ability:	Brand Six in College English Test	
Referees:	Hu Peihua	

Complete this form and attach your literary CV, a two-page project proposal or outline (1,000 words) and a sample of your work in English or Mandarin (2,000 words maximum).

# • CURRICULUM VITAE

Sun Wei

[www.sunweiwriter.com](http://www.sunweiwriter.com)

## Education

1997-2000 Shanghai University of Finance and Economics  
MBA in International Business Administration  
1991-1996 Fudan University, Shanghai  
B.A. in Journalism

## Work Experience

2003-present Novelist, Short Story Writer, Essayist, Columnist  
1999-2003 General Manager, Novel View Media Co., Ltd  
1996-2000 Documentary Filmmaker, Shanghai Television Station

## Book Publications

2019 ***Maze with no Exit***, novella collection; Hunan Literature and Art Publishing House, Beijing, China

2018 ***Janus in Summer***, novel; Hunan Literature and Art Publishing House, Beijing, China  
***Love in the Present Tense***, short story collection; Zhongxi Book Company, Shanghai, China  
***A Hundred and One Ways to Give Yourself Up***, short story collection; Zhongxi Book Company, Shanghai, China  
***I am the Girl with Itchy Feet***, short story collection; Zhongxi Book Company, Shanghai, China  
***Early Birds Get the Bullet***, short story collection; Zhongxi Book Company, Shanghai, China

2016 ***The Map of Time***, novel; Jiangsu Literature and Arts Press, Beijing, China  
(In the process of being adapted into a movie and a TV series, awarded the International literary prize “Sliver Ink” by Ventpils City Council and International Writers’ and Translators’ House)

2015 ***The Confession of a Bear***, novel; Lijiang Press, Shanghai, China  
***The Confession of a Bear***, novel, English Version; Better Link Press, New York, USA  
***Find a Husband before the Killer Finds You***, Novel; New Star Press, Beijing, China  
(In the process of being adapted into a movie and a TV series)

2010 ***Sun on Riches: A Comedy Series - The Adventures of Mary Qian***, short story collection; China Writers Press, Beijing, China  
***Sun on Riches: A Comedy Series - Love and Desire***, short story collection; China Writers Press, Beijing, China  
***Sun on Riches: A Comedy Series - Showcase of the Wealth***, short story collection; China Writers Press, Beijing, China

2008 ***The Good Old Days with Democracy, Science and Law***, novel; China Women's Press, Beijing, China

- Sun on Riches: A Comedy Series - In the Name of Love***, short story collection; Shanghai Culture Press, Shanghai, China
- Malaise of Our Generation***, comments; Oriental Press Center, Shanghai, China
- Love of Our Generation***, comments; Oriental Press Center, Shanghai, China
- 2007 ***A Feminist's "him"***, essay collection; China Writers Press, Beijing, China
- 2006 ***To Where the Flowers Blossom***, novel; Guangxi Normal University Press, Shanghai, China
- Sun on Riches: A Comedy Series - The Rich in China***, Guangxi Normal University Press, Shanghai, China
- 1994 ***Where the Stars and Clouds Gone***, essay collection; Shanghai People's Press, Shanghai, China
- 1992 ***Uncrowned King***, documentary writing; Far East Press, Shanghai, China
- Story Cloud***, fairy tales; Sichuan Youth Press, Sichuan, China

### Major Literary Journal Publications

- 2018 ***Gold Belt***, novel; "Youth Literature"
- If Cat Knows***, novella; "Chinese Writers" (selected in Novella of the Month by Beijing Literature)
- 2017 ***The Mirror***, novella; "Beijing Literature" (selected in Chinese Literature of the Month and Xinhua Digest, Excellence Award Winner for Novella of Beijing Literature Excellence Awards for Literature Works)
- 2016 ***Snow Falling in the Retirement Home***, novel; "Chinese Writers"
- Castalia***, novella; "October"
- Survivors***, novella; "Budding"
- The Youth***, novella; "Budding"
- State Prosecutors in China***, Documentary Writing; "Shanghai Documentaries"
- 2015 ***Night Persons***, novella; "Chinese Writers" (Novella Award of Chinese Writers' Erdos National Literature Award)
- 2014 ***Last Breath of Our Love***, novella; "Shanghai Literature"
- Farewell***, short story; "Harvest"
- 2013 ***Person in a Bottle***, novel; "Chinese Writers" (Excellence Award of Chinese Writers' Erdos National Literature Award for Novel )
- Cork, the hometown of literature***, documentary writing; "Translations"
- Who Is in My Room?***, novella; "Mountain Flowers"
- 2012 ***A Bear's Confession***, novel; "Changjiang Literature & Art"
- 2011 ***Death of the Last Arcadian Village***, novel; "Writers' Journal"
- Secret***, novella; "Shanghai Literature"
- Children on the Top Floor***, novella; "Changjiang Literature & Art"
- Ignition***, novella; "Shanghai Literature"
- 2010 ***The Eagle Keeper***, novella; "October" (selected in Novels of the Month)
- Good Luck***, novella; "Chinese Writers" (selected in Novels of the Month) (***Good Luck*** is in the process of being adapted into a movie. )
- Half a Wolf***, novella; "Fiction World"
- Graveside***, novella; "Chinese Writers"
- You Are One of Us***, novella; "Chinese Writers"
- 2009 ***All the Loneliness Standing or Passing by***, poems; "Chinese Poetry"
- 2006 ***Gazing Cross the River***, novella; "Fiction World" (selected in Novels of the Month)

- 2005 ***Back to Me***, novella; “Shanghai literature” (the First Prize National Literature Writing Competition)
- 1998 ***Head-on Collision with Death***, novella; “Budding” (selected in Chinese Cultural Selections of 21st Century)
- 1989 ***Confusing Age***, novella; “Budding” (the First Prize of Budding Writers’ Competition)

### Other Publications and Works

I started publishing my works in 1982. In addition to the listed above, I have published over 1,000 short stories, columns, essays and fairy tales in newspapers and magazines.

I have also made over 40 documentaries broadcast on televisions.

### Major National Awards

- 2018 **Excellence Award Winner for Novella**  
Beijing Literature Excellence Awards for Literature Works by “Beijing Literature”  
**“An Ideal Planet” Best Paper Award**  
2018 Buddhism Paper Contest: “An Ideal Planet” by World Youth Buddhist Society  
**International Literary prize “Sliver Ink”**  
International Literary prize by Ventspils City Council and International Writers’ and Translators’ House
- 2016 **Novella Award Winner**  
Chinese Writers’ Erdos National Literature Award by “Chinese Writers”
- 2013 **Excellence Award Winner for Novel**  
Chinese Writers’ Erdos National Literature Award by “Chinese Writers”
- 2005 **The First Prize Winner**  
National Literature Writing Competition by “Shanghai Writers”
- 1999 **The First Prize Winner**  
National Golden Sword Documentary Award by Ministry of Justice and National Radio and Television Administration
- 1998 **The Second Prize Winner**  
National Green Century Documentary Award by China Environmental Protection Century Promotion Campaign Organizing Committee
- 1997 **Special Award Winner**  
National Golden Shield Documentary Award by Ministry of Public Security of the People's Republic of China

### Major Fellowships, Scholarships, Residencies

- 2018 Writers in Residence program at the Château de Lavigny Writers’ Residence, Lavigny, Switzerland – 2018 Writer in Residence, Grant Recipient  
Writers in Residence program at Baltic Centre for Writers and Translators, Sweden- Writer in Residence, Grant Recipient  
Writer in Residence program at AIR Literature Västra Götaland, Stömstad, Sweden-Scholar holder, Grant Recipient
- 2017 Writers in Residence program at Franz Edelmaier Residence for Literature and Human Rights by SGEMKO, Merano, Italy- 2017 Writer in Residence, Grant Recipient

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2014	H.A.L.D. 2014 program [Housing Authors & Literature, Denmark] at the International Summer Residency for Writers, Denmark- Writer in Residence for 2014, Fellowship Recipient 2014 Cork International Short Story Festival, Ireland- Invitee Limerick Visiting Writer Program during the City of Culture year in 2014, Ireland- Visiting Writer, Grant Recipient
2013	Writers in Residence program at Baltic Centre for Writers and Translators, Sweden- Writer in Residence
2012	"Life of Discovery" project, International Writing Program at the University of Iowa, USA- Visiting Writer
2011	Writers in Residence program in Cork & 2011 Cork International Short Story Festival, Ireland- Writer in Residence for 2011

## Project Proposal

To participate in an international residential writing program is always a magical experience in my life. I have the impression that an international writers' residence is like a Utopia for writers, which really can make me much more productive and give me lots of extra inspirations for writing.

I am working on a short story series entitled *Mirror*. This series is about the journey people undertake for the truth of what the world is and the eternal question "Who am I?"

This short story series started from an international writers' residency and inspired by my experience there. During the past years in different international writers' residencies, I finished nine short stories of this series. I published five of them on the literature journals and won two national awards for them.

My plan is to finish fifty two interconnecting stories to complete the series, which takes place in different countries all over the world to show a big picture, which symbolises the effort mankind has been making to achieve the goal of self-knowledge. The stories will be published into four short story collections as a series. I am still looking for more stories to fulfil my plan for this entire series.

New Zealand is always my dream land. I hope to find and finish more stories for this series during the residency.

The inspiration of this short story series started with a conversation between my Irish writer friend and me. Once I asked him who used to travel a lot around the world which city he loved most. He replied: "Wherever I go, I have to take myself with me."

It was then did I realise that most people seemingly try to travel farther in the world, actually are attempting to go deeper inside of their heart. They walk through unfamiliar streets merely to enjoy finding the stories which can enlighten them. Usually these stories have something in common with their own lives, whose significance they can't be mindful of when they are trapped in their daily routines. Thus, traveling becomes the way in which they quest for the Mirror that can reflect their souls.

During the process of my trip in Europe and the United States, I encountered my Mirror which gave me a series of awakenings. It was also fascinating to meet a great number of people who were interested in self-discovery just like me. Some had been expecting to know who they truly were for a very long period of time. When they finally faced the Mirror, they avoided looking at their reflection because of fear and confusion. They even denied what they saw in the Mirror, because the truth is not always pleasant. Other people had extremely strong minds. They had believed in their ability of self-knowledge and would rather turn their back on the world to stick with themselves, but on the day they encountered their Mirror, they suddenly realised that they were wrong about who they were.

This short story series is about my Mirror, as well as the people I met who were seeking for their Mirror or suffering from it. My plan is to finish fifty two interconnecting stories to complete the series, which takes place in different countries all over the world to show a big picture, which symbolises the effort mankind has been making to achieve the goal of self-knowledge. It obliges me to walk around the world and find more stories to fulfil my series.

I made this plan because reading is another way to meet the Mirror which indicates the fact that history always repeats itself. Similar stories happened in the past reflect the lives of today. Such as the smog, caused by the air pollution in China nowadays, is like the mirror image of the killer fog in London in the 1950s. I also remember the first time I read the material of the Salem Witch Trail in the 1690s, which reminded me of the Chinese Culture Revolution during 1966 to 1976. Therefore, I believe writing can be an effective method to show the Mirror to the later generation, which I am doing my best to achieve.

What I am interested in my stories is not only the Mirror, but also the efforts mankind has made for self-discovery. Mankind is a certain kind of creature- we are destined to be defeated, to grow old, to die and come to nothing, but we never give up fighting for a tiny, temporary taste of success and glory. We are destined to sink into darkness that people do cruel things to others from time to time, but even under the worst circumstances, there is still a great number of people who behave nobly, bravely and generously to make us believe in the goodness of human nature. We are destined not to have the knowledge of the universe and enough time to figure out the essence of life, but we never give up exploring it, generation after generation. To know who we are probably is the hardest puzzle we can never solve in

our limited lifetime, however never giving up is the most poetic part I want to pass on to the readers.

## **Work Sample**

This is the first chapter from my novel “The Confession of a Bear”. The story happens between Shanghai and an isolated rural village Shucun. The main character Liu is exiled for his failure in a war of office politics. His task is to deliver the donated satellite equipment to an isolated rural village Shuncun, which is thousands of kilometers away from Shanghai. In Shucun, people have ancient philosophy for life. They worship local wild bears, and live harmoniously with their bear friends. Once hurt by the hostility of human beings in Shanghai, Liu feels he would rather live as a bear in Shucun. However, the technology and the information from Shanghai he brings to Shucun is changing the fate of the village and eventually lead to a horrible genocide in this paradise like village.

The novel is written in Chinese. The English Version of this novel was published by Better Link Press in New York, USA, 2015.

## **The Confession of a Bear**

By Sun Wei

### **I**

Legend has it that the Shucun villagers originally lived on the other side of the Himalayas. Due to tribal rivalries their forefathers were forced to abandon their homes in order to flee the carnage and their flight took them all the way to the Hengduan Mountains. For forty-nine days they marched, and they still had not put towering peaks, a landscape strewn with forbidding boulders, and dark forests behind them. Birds and beasts often stopped to gawk at these refugees, as if they had never seen humans before. Now the flatbread and the dried meat on which they had subsisted were depleted, and wild berries and vegetables could not stave off the pangs of hunger. Their clothes were torn and their shoes were worn down in the long march. The lineage was threatened by imminent extinction before they reached safe haven.

Zhewa the Elder mounted the tallest rock he could find, gashed his palm with his sword, took the long bow made of silkworm thorn from his shoulder, drew a falcon feather-tipped arrow from his quiver and released it into the air with his bleeding hand, praying that the gods would lead them out of the jungle to a land of sanctuary.

With a whiz, the arrow disappeared in a blue sky finely fragmented by the leaves and branches of the forest. Zhewa the Elder, guided by the call of the arrow which only he seemed to hear, led his people onward. Everyone became swift of foot again, a new urgency and expectation in their tread.

The towering trees that had hemmed them in began to recede and all of a sudden their eyes were dazzled by a sunlit panorama.

They saw foothills with low vegetation that descended into five small plains in five different directions, much like a fully open flower with five petals growing in the midst of uninhabited forests, mountain peaks, and gorges. It faced south and was sheltered from the wind. There, larks sang in the woods, squirrels skittered from branch to branch, and fawns walked unconcernedly by. Not far down from their feet the Jinsha River roared by, throwing up snow-white foamy crests.

In the meantime, that arrow guided by the gods was standing quietly near a clear brook, planted in the soil of a plot of land that needed no further clearing or leveling for dwellings to be erected on it straightaway. On the other side of the brook lay swaths of wild wheat already golden and ripe for harvesting. This was indeed a home given by the gods! In confused awe and elation, they prostrated themselves to give thanks to the gods for the blessing.

As their foreheads touched the warm soil, the quiet earth beneath their knees suddenly started trembling and a fantastic roar reached their ears from all sides. They could not tell if it was the sound of the shaking of the leaves and branches of massive trees in the wind, or the crashing of the waves of the Jinsha River on its banks, or a peal of thunder in a perfectly clear day. As they wondered, shadows converged from all directions and eclipsed the sunlight on the green grass. They looked up, half rising from the ground, and all strength drained from their legs. They saw bears; not one, but hundreds, maybe thousands of them, emerging from tree roots, low mounds, among tufts of grass and flowering shrubs, much as mushrooms growing under big trees on a rainy day. These plump, stocky figures standing erect not far from the tribesmen eyed them in silence.

The average height of these bears was comparable to that of humans of shorter stature, but they possessed two or three times the mass of an average man. They had round ears, shiny black fur and a white patch at their neck shaped like a crescent moon with its horns pointing upwards. What is most striking to the observer was an almost human face between the black tufts of hair at the temples, a milky white chin, a flat mouth, and small eyes. These upright bears standing in neat formations gave the impression of grotesque-looking, corpulent local villagers dressed in black hooded jackets gathered to challenge the interlopers with sabers drawn and ready to defend their home.

Escape was hardly possible. More bears were springing up out of the ground and now numbered more than the trees in the surrounding forests. Even the habitually calm and composed Zhewa the Elder could not stop the muscles in his face from twitching and quivering, for he knew only too well that a bear standing upright was a bear poised for attack, and the force of a swinging bear's paw would instantly break the bones of even a strong bullock, not to mention a man. Zhewa closed his eyes in despair, waiting for his final moment.

As his fate hung by a thread, a flash of light cleaved the sky, brighter and stronger than sunlight. In that light he felt a sensation of warmth enveloping his body. Am I already dead and on my way to the netherworld? He wondered. Fortunately he was not feeling any pain, by the mercy of his gods! Out of curiosity he opened his eyes a crack to have a peek at the road that his soul had embarked upon. In his partially obstructed view a cloud radiating a brilliant golden glow was moving toward where they were prostrated, its dazzle bringing tears to his eyes. At its approach the nine hundred ninety-nine species of fauna and flora dispersed and the bears with a human face densely carpeting the hillsides parted to make a wide path for the moving light.

The moment the blinding light went out, Zhewa saw before him a humongous bear, its height reaching straight into the clouds and its whole body luminescent. It had a splendid reddish brown coat, a powerful head, and the strong build of a bullock. When it walked slowly on all fours, it appeared at a distance to be a moving mountain, with a massive, bulging, muscular back, and bulky shoulders. "This must be the Bull Bear of legend, the god of bears!" Zhewa cried with wonder to himself.

In the awed silence, the Bull Bear walked at a slow, regal pace, his pelt glistening in the sun. His every footfall was so light it gave an impression of not wanting to hurt the grass underfoot. With a calm composure and half-closed eyes warm and mellow like water, he walked in the manner of a king touring his realm. As his eyes swept past the beings lying at his feet, they felt calm and warmth hitherto unknown to them and, strangely, no fear at all. He paused and turned his head around to take a sweeping survey of the bears with a human face gathered in formations. Where his eyes, like a wind sweeping through the woods, landed, the bears let fall their front paws and dropped them to the ground.

With a slight nod at Zhewa the Elder, the Bull Bear turned into a streak of light and disappeared in the hills. Almost at the same moment the land resonated with another earth-shaking roar as the hundreds of bears with a human face turned in a body and disappeared to their caves without a trace. Only sunlight and the shadows of the clouds traveled silently across the smooth grassy plain.

The prostrate humans, as if wakened out of a dream, had a moment of dazed wonderment before regaining the presence of mind to bring their brows back down into contact with the soil to complete their thanksgiving to the gods.

Thus began the settlement of the Shucun villagers on this plain, where they've lived and bred until this day at the border of Yunnan and Sichuan, boasting 272 households in five large tracts of densely spaced dwellings. Shucun village is in the jurisdiction of Xuyang County of Yunnan Province and is unreachable by car, boat, or plane. This virtual isolation from the rest of the world has meant that these people are self-sufficient in food and clothing. They rely on the Elder to preside over weddings and funerals as well as seed sowings. They revere the God of the Bears, worship the Bull Bear as God incarnate and treat the bears with a human face as benefactors and friendly neighbors that have taken them in.

They have observed to this day the prohibition issued by Zhewa the Elder against harming any bear.

Liu Yushan, Deputy County Chief of Xuyang, tall and plump in his middle years, had his hair heavily pomaded and possessed a face bronzed and creased by long exposure to the sun, and eyes that became bloodshot the moment he imbibed alcohol. He was also a chain smoker of Double Happiness cigarettes and when he spun a tale he smoked with a vengeance. He shook his head unapprovingly, with the words “silly and ignorant” quivering on the tip of his tongue, but for some reason decided to hold them back.

“Was there ever another sighting of the Bull Bear?” I asked.

“There was a report by village people putting out ears of corn on their roofs to dry under the sun that they had seen a golden glow in the forest, which they had at first suspected to be a forest fire but the glow was gone in a flash,” Liu Yushan answered. “That prompted some to bruit about the manifestation of the God of the Bears. There followed much beating of drums, blowing of trumpets and the killing of sheep and hogs that were offered to the gods. Some woke up to find, when they went to work in the fields, one or two giant foot prints showing five toes, with no follow-on prints that led in any direction. They couldn’t have belonged to an ordinary animal, unless it had flown in, landed at the spot and flown out. The morning dew that had accumulated in the depressions, unaccountably, formed contours and outlines strikingly similar to those of the plains of Shucun.”

Those were stories that vied in grotesqueness as they were relayed from mouth to mouth and were not to be taken seriously.

“Xiao Liu, are you properly fed?” Liu Yushan asked abruptly as he lights another cigarette. “It’s a long way to Shucun village. I think you should leave as early as possible.”

I happen to share the same family name as Liu Yushan. Like him, I am also rotund of body, although much fairer and finer in complexion. Nonetheless, one plump face and another often looked quite alike. For that reason the deputy county chief warmed to me immediately and right away refer to me as “Xiao Ben Jia,” a term of endearment that was something like “my young cousin.” Then he went further and everyone he could get hold of, he asked rhetorically if we look like father and son. And throwing his heavy arm around my shoulders, he shoved and paraded me around until I felt almost light headed.

The fact is there was no way that this deputy county chief and I could be perceived as father and son. I realized that he was only forty-six and I was over thirty-four. It was only due to the different environments in which we had lived that he looked much older than his age and I had kept my youthful look. I didn’t feel comfortable being called “Xiao Liu” either. In my company, indeed, in almost all foreign or pseudo-foreign companies in Shanghai, people call each other by their English names. My English name is Kevin, which I have used in more than a decade of hopping from one Fortune 500 company to another.

Fourteen months ago, I was once again at the privileged forefront of the layoff list of my company. The downsizing was attributed to the economic crisis. It seemed I never had any luck with foreign companies. It took me two or three years to be promoted to a supervisory position, but in seven or eight years, after those I had once supervised were given managerial jobs, I stayed a

mere supervisor. Every time there is a campaign of sending cadres into the field, salary cuts or layoffs, I never fail to figure prominently on the list of candidates.

This time around, after a hiatus of twelve months of unemployment, I got hired by HZ Communications China. But before my chair in the prime commercial real estate in downtown Shanghai was warmed by my behind, I was again sent into the field. Dressed in Calvin Klein attire, carrying an Emporio Armani attaché case and a Montblanc pen in my shirt pocket, I flew all the way from Pudong Airport in Shanghai to Kunming, where my company has an office. From there I traveled by car and, after days of driving, arrived at long last in this little town at the border of Sichuan Province, hemmed in by tall peaks crowned by dense clouds.

Come to think of it, were it not for the misplaced paternal affection of Liu Yushan, I would not have been able to make so much progress in so short a time in my work. I had arrived only yesterday morning by the overnight long-distance bus. Mr. Liu, the deputy county chief, had dinner with me and this morning he came during breakfast to grace me with his presence, and the best car in the county government motor pool was placed at my service and was now parked outside. This was my transportation to the Shucun village.

This best car, allegedly once a Mazda SUV, looked as though it were only a few years my junior and after many successive replacements of parts, traces of its former self were almost all gone. As I depressed the pedal to drive up the road leading into the mountains, I could still see Liu Yushan in the rear view mirror waving to me from a distance. Ahead of me was an inky sky threatening rain, and a chain of mountains whose ridge resembled the ripple-like furry back of a divine beast, ornamented by splashes of spring blooms and veiled in mists.

I revved the engine up the ascending road and as the car made a turn around a bend, Liu Yushan and the county town of black-tiled single-level houses vanished behind me. The puny car was swallowed in the folds of the mountain spurs, surrounded by the sougning of winds blowing through the giant trees.