



Kramp

Gao Xingjian , Jan A.M. de Meyer (translator) , Michel Hockx (translator) , Hong Yu (translator) , Anne Sytske Keijser (translator) , Mark Leenhouts (translator) , Sylvia Marijnissen (translator)

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Kramp, de eerste Nederlandse vertaling van Nobelprijswinnaar Gao Xingjian, is een verhalenbundel waarin alle aspecten uit het werk van Gao Xingjian bij elkaar komen. Het boek bevat een keuze uit Gao Xingjians korte verhalen van de vroege jaren tachtig tot aan 1990.

Gao Xingjians verhalen zijn korte schetsen van herinneringen of dagelijkse voorvallen, gekenmerkt door een onopgesmukte stijl van een serene, beschouwende inslag.

In het verhaal 'Een ongeluk' bijvoorbeeld, zegt de verteller dat je er 'met een beetje verbeelding een heel aangrijpend verhaal van zou kunnen maken'. 'Maar,' voegt hij daar onmiddellijk aan toe, 'dat is dan fictie'. In 'Een hengel voor mijn grootvader' vormt de aankoop van een werphengel de aanleiding voor een reeks losse, ingetogen herinneringen aan de grootvader van de verteller.

Kramp is de ideale introductie van een internationaal erkend schrijver.

De zes verhalen in deze bundel zijn 'Kramp', 'Een ongeluk', 'De Tempel van de Volmaakte Goedertierenheid', 'In het park', 'Een hengel voor mijn grootvader' en 'In een oogwenk'. De verhalen worden gevolgd door een nawoord van Mark Leenhouts.

Kramp Details

Date : Published 2001 by Meulenhoff (first published 1989)

ISBN : 9789029070102

Author : Gao Xingjian , Jan A.M. de Meyer (translator) , Michel Hockx (translator) , Hong Yu (translator) , Anne Sytske Keijser (translator) , Mark Leenhouts (translator) , Sylvia Marijnissen (translator)

Format : Hardcover 127 pages

Genre : Short Stories, Fiction, Cultural, China, Nobel Prize, Asia, Asian Literature, Chinese Literature

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Download and Read Free Online Kramp Gao Xingjian , Jan A.M. de Meyer (translator) , Michel Hockx (translator) , Hong Yu (translator) , Anne Sytske Keijser (translator) , Mark Leenhouts (translator) , Sylvia Marijnissen (translator)

From Reader Review Kramp for online ebook

Emer says

In 2000 Gao Xingjian was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature. There's a copy of his book 'Soul Mountain' sitting on my mum's bookshelf at home. I've always picked it up whenever I visit but for some reason have never actually begun to read even though I like the sound of it. So I thought I might first try some short stories by him to get a sense of what I might expect whenever I do take the plunge with 'Soul Mountain'. This English language version of 'Buying a Fishing Rod for my Grandfather' contains just six stories (the original collection contains seventeen).

There's a very interesting translator's note at the back of this collection that quotes Gao Xingjian as saying the following:

Gao's fiction does not set out to tell a story. There is no plot, as is found in most fiction, and anything of interest to be found in it is inherent to the language itself. He proposes that the art of fiction is "the actualisation of language and not the imitation of reality in writing".

This would have set the alarm bells ringing for me if I had read this note **BEFORE** I read the short story collection. Above all else, I value storytelling. I think a story should be just that, a story. If you want to evoke feelings and emotions purely from language and writing, then to me that is poetry. So go write that! Short form poetry, long form poetry...whatever floats your boat. Poetry to me is pure human emotion expressed through language and I am very much a fan of it. And I absolutely believe that human emotion can be expressed through storytelling and fiction writing in general too...but for it to be considered a story, I need a plot. I need something to cohesively connect together the beautiful words and emotions they can evoke, rather than simply having beautifully phrased words together on a page.

What immediately follows are my initial reactions to each of the stories **BEFORE** I read the translator's note:

The Temple

Upon reaching the end of the story I exclaimed 'what the actual heck was that?' I didn't like how the main character kept talking to the reader. Breaking the fourth wall so to speak. I was waiting for the language to evoke some genuine feeling in me or to give me a true sense of a blissful day with this honeymooning couple in their supposed blissful happiness... It just never happened for me.

One star

In the Park

This was strangely enjoyable. Almost all of the story was in the form of a conversation between two old, unnamed friends with the briefest of interludes describing the sights around them as their conversation had natural pausing points. I was immediately intrigued by what was happening between the two central characters and what has gone between them in the past. This was very much a story where you could read between the lines and attempt to decipher what it was they weren't actually saying to each other.

Three and a half stars

Cramp

Just beautiful. Powerfully written and very emotive. Brought tears to my eyes

Four and a half stars

The Accident

An accident occurs and its impact ripples through the passing strangers until it becomes almost mythical...almost like the old game of Chinese whispers where the original message gets ever more distorted as the story is related by more and more people. It's a perfect snapshot of how people are just simply that, people. However, towards the end of the story the narrator started conversing with the reader, as in the first short, which I don't like but by that stage my emotions had truly been stirred. *Three stars*

Buying a fishing rod for my grandfather

The title story. I found this to be nonsensical almost. The plot bounced around between memories, imaginings and what was the current day.... And my eyes started to glaze over pretty quickly. This one wasn't for me.

One star

In An Instant

Oh go away already book!!

Yes, great...it's a beautiful idea. How so much "life" happens in an instant but spare me the 'oh isn't it poetic' malarkey and give me an actual story!

One star

It's funny right? **Exactly** what the author said I *shouldn't* expect as a reader from his stories *is* what I most longed for. Especially in the short called 'In An Instant'. I can appreciate what Gao Xingjian is trying to achieve with his writing. And clearly he has been incredibly successful! I mean hands up who here has been

awarded a Nobel prize for literature.....

looks around

.....

no movement

.....

deafening silence

.....

Yup..... I thought not!

So I guess he knows **A LOT** more about writing than I could ever hope to as a humble reader. So while I am not unhappy that I read this collection I think it just has shown me that perhaps this is not an author to my taste. We have very different opinions about literature and I guess we will have to respectfully agree to disagree!

And finally, a mention should be given to the translator Mabel Lee. The work of translators is an absolutely awe inspiring skill. To try to get into the author's head, their soul. Feel what it is they were feeling, what it is they want the reader to feel and to somehow translate that to a whole other language.... It's amazing. Especially when so many times there just aren't direct translations for colloquial sayings, how different languages structure sentences differently, what do you give prominence to? When I was reading these stories the language felt so natural. It felt like I was reading exactly the words the author meant me to be reading. At no time did I wonder was this something that could have been lost in translation so I think a massive amount of credit should go to the success of the translation.

Sadly for me this was just **two stars**

Orsodimondo says

IL CRAMPO

Il crampo è il titolo di uno di questi sei racconti, ed è quello che devo avere avuto se ho abbandonato la lettura, per altro mai stimolante, men che meno avvincente, se l'ho abbandonata all'inizio dell'ultimo racconto, quando ormai il più era fatto.

Evidentemente anche il mio senso del dovere, o quello della completezza, ha limiti.

Confermando purtroppo la mia scarsa reattività e attrazione per la letteratura (e il cinema) che viene dall'Asia meno vicina.

Il tentativo l'ho fatto, stimolato anche dal fatto che nel 2000 Xíngjiàn ha vinto il Nobel per la Letteratura, ci

ho provato. Ma ho fallito.

Una scrittura quasi in forma di ideogramma è la sintesi critica più geniale che abbia letto.
Geniale nel senso che fa sbellicare.

Vderevlean says

Am deschis volumul acesta de proză scurtă cu așteptări mari. În fond e vorba de un premiu Nobel la mijloc. Ți e chiar dac? e doar un volum, până? acum rezultatul e dezamăgitor.

Gao Xingjian scrie despre China având în cap o imagine a trecutului, o nostalgie a memoriei. Personajele din povestiri nu sunt esențiale, esențial? e tinerețea, copilăria lor. Ici, colo, câte o sugestie a dictaturii partidului, câte o nuanță mai violentă despre sârăcie și despre condiția de locuitor chinez. Scenariul narativ e minimal dac? nu dispare complet. Jocul cu amintirile e cel mai important, însă e insuficient pentru a ține în viață unele dintre povestiri.

Guido says

Commentare un libro tradotto dal cinese non mi sembra del tutto corretto nei confronti del suo autore; credo sia giusto precisare che, non avendo idea di quali dettagli e quali sfumature di stile e significato siano andati perduti nel passaggio all'italiano, questo commento si riferisce in modo particolare a questa versione, e il mio giudizio è parziale e molto limitato. La premessa è doverosa perché questo libro mi ha davvero deluso: ho poca fiducia nei premi, ma per qualche motivo ero convinto che il Nobel a Gao Xingjian fosse ben motivato. Troppe cose, in questi racconti, sembrano non funzionare a dovere. I primi quattro sono d'impronta cechoviana, raccontano vicende di persone comuni in uno stile estremamente lineare e privo di enfasi, evidenziando limiti e difetti della società cinese. L'impressione è che manchi qualcosa: la semplicità della prosa sembra essere fine a sé stessa; se altri autori andrebbero criticati per l'abuso di avverbi e aggettivi, impiegati per nascondere la mancanza di ispirazione, Gao Xingjian sembra ricorrere al trucco opposto, affidandosi al candore delle frasi più elementari per dare un'impressione di poesia: ma si avverte decisamente la mancanza di una componente emotiva sufficiente a tenere vivo l'interesse. Gli altri due racconti sono più sperimentali, e l'intento è meno ovvio, ma fin troppo confuso: nel primo lo stile si fa improvvisamente carico di subordinate, che sembrano artificiose e innaturali, un virtuosismo privo di senso; mentre il secondo, "Attimi", è un tentativo (piuttosto malriuscito) di raccontare per immagini, e diventa ben presto noioso. Qualcosa in questi esperimenti suona poco convincente; è come assistere allo spettacolo di un prestigiatore troppo presuntuoso riuscendo a indovinare tutti i suoi artifici. Mi aspettavo qualcosa di più concreto e, soprattutto, di più sincero. Capisco che questi racconti non sono così rappresentativi; per farmi un'idea più completa dovrei leggere almeno *La montagna dell'anima*, ma questa esperienza ha decisamente smorzato la mia curiosità.

Jim says

Gao Xingjian is another one of those Nobel Prize winners who, when the announcement came, we all went, "Eh?" And I do know that's part of the point, to bring to the world's attention a writer who's not as well-

known as he or she might be. I decided to read him on two counts: 1) he'd been awarded the Nobel Prize (in 2000 to save you checking) and 2) he was Chinese and I couldn't remember reading *anything* else by a Chinese author.

Gao himself selected the six stories of this English-language version of *Buying a Fishing Rod for My Grandfather*. According to the translator "it is his view that these stories are best able to represent what he is striving to achieve in his fiction." In the Chinese original there were seventeen stories. Five come from this book; the sixth, 'In an Instant' was written in Paris in 1990 where he's lived since 1987. So you can probably look upon this book as a sampler.

I came to this with no preconceptions—I didn't know if these were going to be contemporary stories or have a period setting—but I was pleased to find them all set in present day China (or at least China as it was in the eighties) although there is some looking back to, as the narrator of the first story, 'The Temple', puts it, "those catastrophic years in this country, our families suffered through many misfortunes, and to some extent we still resented our generation's fate." This theme is also present in two other stories, 'In the Park' and the title story.

I say 'stories' but these are not, as I expected (so I must've had some preconceptions), but vignettes, slices of life. The translator explains:

There is no plot, as found in most fiction, and anything of interest to be found in it is inherent in the language itself. More explicit is his proposal that the linguistic art of fiction is "the actualization of language and not the imitation of reality in writing," and that its power to fascinate lies in the fact that, even while employing language, it is able to evoke authentic feelings in the reader.

Just as well I'm not a fan of traditional stories then.

In '**The Temple**' a young couple go on honeymoon. Basically they get on a train and see where it takes them. They're city folk but they have been to the countryside before:

It all felt so different from the time when we were graduates sent to work in the countryside. Now we were just visitors passing through, tourists, and the complicated relationships between the people here had nothing to do with us. Inevitably, this made us city dwellers feel somewhat superior. Fangfang clutched my arm tightly and I leaned close to her, and we could sense people's eyes on us. But we didn't belong to this town; we were from another world. We walked right past them, but they didn't gossip about us; they only gossiped about the people they knew.

Not much happens. They're looking for sights to see but the only thing locally is a building known as "the big temple" although in reality it's not very big but then everything's relative. There they have an exchange with a local man who's taken the child of his paternal cousin with him looking for grasshoppers; the boy wants to collect five. They share some melons—I suppose they must've been smaller melons than I'm used to—and a bit of cake but the conversation never really gets off the ground and the man leaves. And that's it. Only that can't be it. There's clearly stuff going on in between the lines that I wasn't prepared for.

'**In the Park**' is a good story to follow 'The Temple' and arguably the best in the book. Again we have a couple but this time it's a couple who didn't get together and who've met years later but struggle to connect and their conversation—the story is written almost completely in dialogue with no speech tags—keeps going down cul-de-sacs: "Let's talk about something else." While they're sitting there trying to find common

ground they notice a girl waiting, presumably for her beau, and this provides them with a topic they can discuss but it also leads them into dangerous waters and the reunion doesn't end up going as well as I expect either had hoped it will. This was a much better piece and one I found I could relate to. It was a story that could've happened in any park across the globe.

In **'Cramp'** a man has swum out further than was wise and, gets cramp and, as the sun begins to set is in real danger of drowning:

White-crested waves on the ink green sea. The surging waves surround him, but no fishing boats are at work. Turning his body, he is borne up by the waves. Up ahead on the grey-black sea is a dark spot, far in the distance. He drops down between the waves and can no longer see the surface of the sea. The sloping sea is black and shiny, smoother than satin. The cramp in his stomach gets worse. Lying on his back and floating on the water, he massages the hard spot on his abdomen until it hurts less. Diagonally in front, above his head, is a feathery cloud; up there, the wind must be even stronger.

And then things go from bad to worse and he encounters the jellyfish. Simple and effective. Will he survive? And, again, one that could happen in any ocean across the globe.

'The Accident' documents what happens when—and, more importantly, after—a bus hits a cyclist:

A bicycle fitted with an extra wheel for a baby-buggy with a red-and-blue checkered cloth shade is crossing diagonally from the other side of the road, and a man is riding it. Coming from the opposite direction is a two-carriage electric trolley bus that is going quite fast, but not too fast.

Most of this story consists of comments from the crowd. They're not assigned to anyone in particular but it doesn't matter. Much is revealed about contemporary Chinese attitudes by how they respond to this accident, those who witness it and then those who come across the scene afterwards and aren't sure what's happened:

"What happened? Was there an accident? Was someone killed?"

"It was father and son, one of them is dead."

"Which of them died?"

"The old man!"

"What about the son?"

"Unhurt."

"That's shocking! Why didn't he pull his father out of the way?"

"It was the father who had pushed his son out of the way!"

"Each generation is getting worse, the man was wasting his time bringing up the son!"

"If you don't know what happened, then don't crap on."

"Who's crapping on?"

In the title story, a man sees a fiberglass fishing rod in a store window and is reminded of the times he went fishing and hunting with his grandfather. At first this felt like it was going to be a straightforward story: man sees rod, gets nostalgic, buys the rod and presents it to his grandfather. And that is what appears to be happening only when he gets to his hometown everything's changed:

I find an older man and ask him where the lake used to be. If I know where the lake was, it will be easy to find the stone bridge, and when I find the stone bridge, it will be easy to find Nanhu Road, and when I find Nanhu Road, I'll be able to feel the way to my old home.

The lake? Which lake? The lake that was filled in. Oh, that lake, the lake that was filled in is right here. He points with his foot. This used to be the lake. So we're standing on the bottom. Was there once a stone bridge nearby? Can't you see that there are asphalt roads everywhere?

And then the next thing you know we're in the middle of watching a football match—the 1986 World Cup final in Mexico City (Argentina vs. West Germany)—and I thought, *What the heck?* In her review in *The Guardian* Julia Lovell has this to say about this story:

'Buying a Fishing Rod for my Grandfather', is intriguingly framed as a self-delusory nostalgia trip, but collapses into Gao's ponderous version of western modernism-by-numbers: surreal juxtapositions of time and place, stream of consciousness, a fragmented narrative voice locked into tediously self-analytical conversation with itself.

Actually once you get to the end of the story you do realise what's been happening here and it all starts to make more sense but it will throw you.

Worse is the final piece, '**In an Instant**', which "traces the lives of three people on a typical day." That's how the entry in Wikipedia puts it. I lost interest about halfway through. Lovell calls it "a formal experiment in simultaneity that runs through a checklist of modernist devices—narrative cuts and leaps, bizarre images, Beckettian clowns—as mechanically as an English undergraduate's revision primer."

So, as you might expect with a sampler, it's a mixed bag. The "good" depends on a subtle use of language and is impressive but even the "bad" has its moments:

Seagulls are circling in the sky, screeching noisily. Whether they have to screech like this to look for food or if it's out of sheer joy isn't clear, because they use a language not understood by humans. However, understanding or not is unimportant, what is important is that in the blue sky on this island they can soar as they will and can call out noisily.

I think I'll think twice before looking out one of his novels though.

Niloofer Masoomi says

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?????? ?????? ?????? ??? ?? ?????? ??? ?????? ??? ?????? ?? ?? ???.

cindy says

Sebuah kumpulan cerpen yg indah sekaligus tidak mudah dimengerti. Kata pengantarnya mengibaratkan cerpen2 di dalamnya sebagai lukisan impresionist dengan kekuatan narasi Gao Xingjian sebagai warna-warni cat yang menangkap moment dalam kehidupan. Ungkapan yg pas sekali.

Jika ada bentuk penyajian cerita yg kurasa benar2 menantang daya pengertianku, maka itu adalah gaya *stream of consciousness*. Kelima cerpen di sini, sediki banyak menggunakan bentuk ini. Yang mudah dan ringan seperti di cerita *Kuil* dan *Kram*. Juga dalam cerpen *Kecelakaan* awalnya bernada gosip tapi diakhiri dengan penuh pesan filsafat.

Dua cerpen terakhir, *Membeli Batang Pancing untuk Kakekku* dan *Seketika* jauh-jauh lebih berat. Keduanya dengan enakanya berpindah-pindah sudut pandang pertama, kedua, ketiga tanpa peringatan pada pembacanya. Lebih parah lagi, cerita juga seenak hidungnya berpindah-pindah kisah dan tokohnya. Mungkin Batang Pancing sedikit lebih mudah dimengerti karena tema lingkungan hidupnya yg jauh lebih terbuka, namun Seketika benar-benar..... samar? membingungkan? penuh lamunan?

Mudah untuk menangkap keindahan kalimat-kalimat di kisah-kisah ini, tapi lebih rumit dan repot untuk mengerti esensi ceritanya. Seperti mengintip potongan-potongan impian seseorang tanpa benar-benar memahaminya.

Inês says

Não vou atribuir estrelas porque simplesmente não percebi nada.

Dion Yulianto says

Rasa penasaran setelah membaca cerpen Gao Xingjian dalam kumcer Dijual Keajaiban yang rasanya ‘kok gitu aja?’ maka terbitnya buku ini tentu saja adalah sebuah kabar gembira. Karya lain penulis ini, novel Gunung Jiwa juga sudah susah banget nyarinya. Banyak pembaca baru macam kita-kita ini akhirnya bingung saat hendak mencicipi rasa dalam karya si penulis peraih Nobel yang memilih eksil ke Prancis ini. Apa yang khas dari karya-karyanya? Apakah senada dengan Mo Yan, atukah ada rasa asli lain yang khas dari penulis asal Tiongkok ini?

Membaca cerpen-cerpen di buku ini, kita seperti diajak menanjak menuju ke sebuah puncak gunung. Awalnya lumayan mudah dan dengan pemandangan yang indah. Etape kedua sudah agak menanjak. Bagian selanjutnya lumayan menanjak, dan begitu berturut-turut hingga menanjaknya ekstrem banget sampai ngos-ngosan bacanya. Dua cerpen terakhir adalah yang paling menguras pikiran, mana panjang pula itu dua cerpen ck ck ck. Akhirnya, setelah menamatkan membaca seluruh cerpen di buku ini (dengan dua cerpen yang sedemikian sulit diikuti di bagian akhir), pembaca akan mengetahui jawaban tentang mengapa buku ini begini. Buku ini menjadi contoh sekaligus bukti bahwa evolusi dalam penulisan fiksi ternyata masih belum selesai.

Cerpen-cerpen di buku ini mengisahkan tentang hal-hal yang biasa-biasa saja. Ingatan atau memori tampaknya menjadi jiwa (kalau bukan menghantui) buku ini. Tentang anak yang membelikan pancing untuk kakeknya, tentang kecelakaan yang menimpa seorang pria, dan tentang pria muda yang membaca bukunya di pantai dan lalu entah kenapa sampai ke mana-mana. Secara tema, kesederhanaan cerpen-cerpen ini mengingatkan saya pada cerpenya Kawabata, hanya saja lebih panjang dan sedikit lebih agak kompleks. Yang bikin terkejut dari cerpen-cerpen di buku ini adalah cara penulis bernarasi. Bayangkan ketika sedang hanyut dalam paragraf ketiga, pembaca tiba-tiba disuguhi cerita baru di paragraf keempat, lalu ceritanya ganti lagi di paragraf ke enam. Begitu seterusnya sampai cerita ditutup dengan penggalan dari cerita di paragraf pertama. Dan campur-aduk cerita ini terjadi dalam satu cerpen, di mana satu paragraf dengan paragraf lain sepertinya tidak secara langsung terkait tapi memang terkait. Bingung kan? Iya, saya sudah bingung sejak lima hari lalu, tapi saya *ampet* saja sendiri.

Untungnya, penulis berbaik hati dengan memberikan bonus tulisan tentang menulis di bab paling akhir buku

ini. Walau masih lumayan berat, Gao Xingjian memaparkan teknik menulisnya yang sepertinya acak-acakan tetapi sebenarnya tidak. Ia menyebut teknik menulis paragraf yang tidak saling bersambung ini sebagai hal yang sah-sah saja dilakukan seorang penulis atas nama kreativitas. Apa yang dilakukan Gao ini mungkin boleh-boleh saja, tetapi apakah tekniknya ini akan bisa diterima oleh pembaca, ceritanya lain lagi. Yang jelas, setelah membaca pemaparan di bab terakhir ini, saya ingin membaca ulang cerpen-cerpen di buku ini, terutama dua cerpen paling akhir yang bikin senewen itu.

Pengarang yang berhasil, salah satunya, adalah pengarang yang bisa memaksa pembaca untuk membaca ulang karyanya lagi dan lagi. Saya ingin membaca ulang kumcer-kumcer di buku setelah mendapatkan amunisi dari bab terakhir di buku ini. Bukan karena suka sih, lebih karena penasaran. Siapa tahu, setelah membaca kumcer ini untuk kedua kalinya, bintangnya naik jadi empat. Pembaca boleh dong berevolusi.

????? ????? says

?????? ?????? ?? ??????? ?????? ?????? ???. ???? ?? ?????? ??? ?????! ??? ??? ? ?????? ?? ?????

Kenneth says

In the afterword it is remarked upon that "Gao warns readers that his fiction does not set out to tell a story. There is no plot, as found in most fiction, and anything of interest to be found in it is inherent in the language itself." Given that last bit one can quite safely assume more than a little gets lost in translation.

Laura says

Rakastin tättä. Rakastin tunnetta, joka parhaiden novellien jälkeen jäi päälle, rakastin pieniä hetkiä ja viipyilevyyttä. Muutama novelli meni ehkä hieman ohi tai en niille niin lämmennyt, mutta yli puolelle olisin voinut antaa vaikka kuusi tähteä. Paras lukemani novellikokoelma, aivan kevyesti.

Vasco Simões says

Pequenos contos nos quais podemos encontrar o que dá o título a este livro. São escritos com elegância e sem pomposidade. No se refere ao conto Uma Cana de Pesca para o Meu Avô e que pelos vistos é o mais famoso está uma grande salganhada uma vez que mistura a cana de pesca...o avô...o jogo Alemanha Federal - Argentina no Mundial...Golo...parece um sonho muito confuso. Os excertos são um belo exercício de leitura, uma vez que são frases curtas soltas mas muito bem escritas que nos transportam para diferentes cenários.

Alberto Messina says

Nostalgico. A causa di alcuni problemi personali, e che certamente non interessano i "buoni lettori", ma che

hanno influenzato negativamente la fruizione e il regolare andamento di lettura, ho mal assimilato questo testo. Sicuramente quando si affronta un autore così distante per cultura geografica ed esperienza, risulta ostica la comprensione e il significato reale delle parole che l'autore ha attribuito al proprio racconto. Benché la serie di Storie che compone questa raccolta sia permeata di nostalgia, in maniera particolare il racconto "Una canna da pesca per mio nonno", l'indole culturale cinese al non esternare con vividezza la propria emotività, ha reso (ovviamente secondo la mia opinione) fredda la narrazione. Mi riservo tuttavia di rileggere in futuro questa raccolta, scevro dalle mie afflizioni.

Sam says

This is a beautifully written collection of short stories that reflect both the day to day and the utterly magical and enlightening moments in life from the discovery of a secluded temple to near death experiences and moments of utter devastation. These snippets of time, experiences and reminiscences show the pleasure that can be found anywhere and the appreciation for the little things that can be discovered in the simplest, rawest and most humbling moments. This is a surprisingly enjoyable collection of simple life stories yet the lack of purpose to each left me feeling a little flat with a distinct unsatisfied feeling and wanting to know more. This is deliberate on behalf of Xingjian who wrote these not to tell a story but to provide interest through his use of language and the 'imitation of reality'. In this he certainly does succeed.

Amene says

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Sidharth Vardhan says

The stories do not have such old-school things like plot or characters. Instead they are write ups written with intention of exciting emotions in readers (or so says the translator's note). I normally like that sort of writing but most of these stories didn't work for me. Keeping with Goodreads tradation, I'm gonna blame the translation. The third star is entirely for titular story which was the only one that worked for me.

Rob Baker says

In her notes at the end of this story collection, the translator says that Gao "warns readers that his fiction does not set out to tell a story" (124). True that. The pieces are sometimes ("Temple", "In the Park", "Cramp") slice-of-life moments of people seemingly seeking unfindable happiness; other times ("In an Instant") they are dream-like collections of disconnected images.

This author won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2000, and I have to think -- at least based on this book and the bit I've read about him--that it's more because of his political background than because of his writing per se.

Radit Panjapiyakul says

Beautiful but unsentimental, simple and complex at the same time, creative and yet never seem too calculated or forgot its root, there's a reason why Gao Xingjian is one of my favorite writers. For me, he seems to strike a balance that's not so easy to find in modernism.

Nazmi Yaakub says

MEMBACA karya pengarang yang pernah membakar bagasinya yang mengandungi sejumlah manuskripnya pada era Revolusi Kebudayaan China (1966-1976) bukan pengalaman yang menyenangkan. Kita seolah-olah dihela oleh Gao Xingjian yang menerima Hadiah Nobel Kesusasteraan pada 2000 itu, sebelum dibiarkan terkontang-kanting dalam dunia imajinasinya untuk menebak maksudnya.

Namun, ia tidaklah memberikan pengalaman yang menyenangkan sepenuhnya kerana adakalanya seperti dalam sepotong cerpennya, *In The Park*, kita bakal diawang-awangkan oleh jalinan dua jalur cinta; satu adalah nostalgia terhadap cinta yang diremukkan oleh zaman lampau, manakala satu lagi cinta yang bakal dikecaikan oleh zaman kini.

Ajaibnya dua jalur yang berbeza dengan watak yang berlainan itu, seolah-olah bermula dan bakal berakhir pada garis yang sama sehingga identiti watak itu tidak lagi menjadi penting dan kita sendiri akan hilang punca dalam jalinan dialog yang sudah tidak terikat pada pengucapnya.

The Accident pula sebenarnya adalah satu peristiwa kemalangan yang biasa di sebuah kota raya tetapi Gao menjadikan peristiwa itu sangat mengesankan tetapi dengan perlahan-lahan, beliau menyedarkan peristiwa yang luar biasa pada satu ketika, bakal luput sehingga kita sendiri pun pada hujungnya seolah-olah terlupa terhadap peristiwa berkenaan. Membaca *The Accident* seolah-olah kita dihakimi oleh Gao terhadap tanggapan kita dalam kehidupan rutin yang serba laju di kota yang serba deras ini.

Cerpen *Buying a Fishing Rod for My Grandfather* yang menjadi judul kumpulan cerpen ini pula menghela nostalgia watak terhadap suasana desanya melalui perjalanan imajinasinya yang dilatari perubahan zaman yang sangat mengejutkan. Kita seolah-olah penumpang sebuah kenderaan masa yang bergerak laju dengan kiri dan kanan kita adalah zaman yang sentiasa berubah.

Enam cerpen dalam kumpulan ini memang bertolak daripada sesuatu yang mudah tetapi perjalanannya menjadi semakin sukar sementelah lagi Gao ialah penganut aliran absurdisme yang menjadi mangsa kepada gerakan komunisme di negara asalnya sehingga beliau pernah 'disekolahkan' semula oleh pemuka Revolusi Kebudayaan.
