

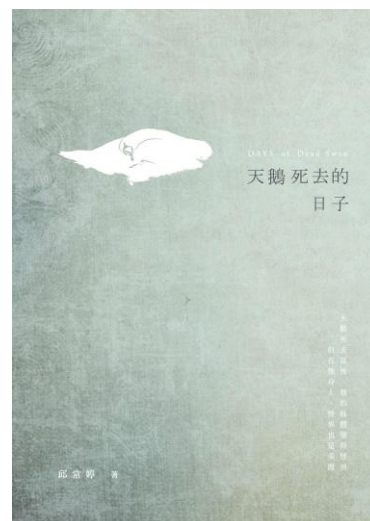
DAYS OF THE DEAD SWANS 天鵝死去的日子

In a near-future society, anyone turning seventy is sent to the gas chamber for execution, a practice the authorities call “purification”. Later, the government amends the law, lowering the age limit to sixty. Some older citizens decide to rebel....

What if there were a near-future dystopian society reminiscent of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, which enacted a law to discard the elderly, similar to *The Ballad of Narayama*? What kind of story would unfold if a group of those over sixty formed a revolutionary army of resistance, fighting with clenched fists like the music video for “Hoppípolla” by Icelandic band Sigur Rós? This is what young novelist Chiou Charng-Ting imagined one day on a train. The result is this book. Its twenty-four chapters depict a generational conflict between the old and the young, highlighting the life memories of the old and their fight to resist the established order.

The book’s characters include an old man who is dying and leaves home in search of his son, a young man who dreams of becoming a writer, a young prostitute, an old prostitute who survives by taking advantage of free food handed out at demonstrations, a revolutionary leader with a fear of flashing lights, and an eighty-year-old woman who believes she is an eight-year-old girl.... The chapter titles are dates, used to organize a nonlinear narrative that sometimes revisits a character’s past and parent-child relationships, sometimes reveals how the authorities have dealt with dissidents, and sometimes depicts the daily lives of the elderly revolutionaries. In “Sleep Day”, one of the book’s final chapters, the truth behind “purification” is at last revealed.

Chiou Charng-Ting’s lyrical prose often pays homage to the ingenuity of renowned writers like Plath and Orwell, yet she also bravely confronts the world’s cruelty. Although the novel’s ambiguous setting



Category: Sci-fi

Publisher: Showwe Information

Date: 1/2018

Pages: 200

Length: 69,105 characters
(approx. 44,900 words in English)

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bft.fiction.nonfiction@moc.gov.tw

seems disconnected from reality, the story addresses common social issues such as pension reform and elder care. It reflects the intergenerational conflict between young people, who resent the elderly's monopolization of resources, and the elderly, who long for care and dignity. As readers piece together the full story, they are also challenged to reflect on our own world.

Chiou Charng-Ting 邱常婷

Chiou Charng-Ting earned her literary MFA from Dong Hwa University, and she is currently pursuing a PhD in children's literature at National Taitung University. Her work, which spans genre fiction, fantasy, children's literature, and upmarket literature, has won the King Car Fantasy Prize, the Unitas New Author Award, and the Openbook Award. Her most representative work is the fantasy novel *Beastosis*.