

To Dao

She speaks in a language that has no past and no future. She understands most extant languages and responds to them in her own, which is, fortunately, understood by all even if it is only spoken by her. As there is no past or future, no one holds it against her if she is late; they just assume she was talking about a later time, an earlier time or even a different date. People wait for her. They sit in cafés and read. They become amateur anthropologists watching other people or protagonists who enjoy being watched. Sometimes they strike up conversations with strangers at the bar and sometimes she arrives and they enjoy her company. No one gets upset if she doesn't correspond or return phone calls within a certain time frame. As time cannot be framed for her, people feel fortunate to hear back from her at all.

She doesn't lament the fact that though her vocabulary grows, the vocabulary of her language doesn't. And she doesn't look for words in her language to be incorporated into academic, slang or urban dictionaries. Mostly, she remains as unconcerned with the etymology of her tongue as she is with the fact that there are no award winning works of literature to capture its poetry, phonology and colloquialisms. Concern, after all, may be cause for creation, perhaps documentation. But believing that to stop life in attempts to capture it is not only contrary to consciousness, but to conscience—she's never even snapped a photograph. And, as no one calls her out on anacolutha or anachronisms, she wouldn't know how to edit her writings so that anyone else could understand them. Certain that the moment a text is edited for comprehension it takes on the crucial and critical purpose of communication, she knows her writing will go the way of her language when she leaves. And yet, she manages to be an entertaining storyteller by stripping down tales to little what-happens-next morsels. No one congratulates her on rhyme, rhythm, witticisms, word-play, poetic license, double entendres or interesting homophonous, homographic

or homonymic phrases. But it doesn't prevent her from using them in her peculiar parlance, if only for self-amusement, one of the few remedies for loneliness.