

Preface

**One autumn day,
on a yard of trees and waters,
I was suddenly a grown-up
who left all the shining
but tearful moments behind.**

Sukyeong Kim Editor / F.book

*First,
I remember... how I longed to
live like clouds in the sky*

I did not fully understand then but I used to say I wanted to live like clouds. I thought emptying myself and walking free could not be too difficult. To me, the act of possessing and filling was somewhere along the line of greed, and emptying was thus a modest – and easy – thing. I would easily hate myself if I showed a hint of greediness, thought I, without knowing how foolish I was. Only after spending half a life did I realize emptying and freeing myself from greed was the most difficult thing. The act of filling was not about greed, but more about illusion. The real greedy part of my foolishness was the very thought that I could hate myself at the slightest hint of greed. Who could be sure the clouds are without weight or bounds in the first place? We all just assume so. The freedom of true emptying only comes after pouring out all the tears stored inside the hearts and eyes. Now I know the secret of the cloud-like freedom : facing and leaving behind all the tears. I see clouds again in the photos. I go back

to the old resolution I made. I say the same thing to myself but with a little different level of understanding. That will make a big difference, though. It should because I have been filling in a sufficient number of years so far.

*Second,
I remember... how I longed to
blossom one day like the wild
flowers.*

I thought my turn would naturally come. I thought I was already a flower, full of life and splendor, lacking only the right season. But it did not take too long before I realized I was living in vanity and it was nothing more than a penance. Letting myself blossom was no longer my story. I gave up, probably too soon. I could carry on. I did not have to blossom. There was no need to dream. Looking back, it was a sad series of events. I let my desire and dreams go – and truly forgot - too fast, too early. The photos here are scolding me about that, and the old desire rushed back to me, asking ‘why are you letting yourself satisfy with a weed of life?’

*Third,
I remember...how I was
determined to live up to my
dreams.*

If I may, I want to ask if you remember your old dreams. When you were too young to achieve anything significant and thus had potential to be anything, what did you dream of? There should have been no limit. You just let your mind go free and dream, right? A shoemaker can dream to become a president. A president could secretly entertain a dream to make shoes one day. No one

can speak ill of either. Let dreams flow in your mind without striking walls. Let your ears listen to your heart. So, what was your dream?

I may have to change my question. Wait, it is not I but the pictures exhibited here today. What does your heart say? Forget all the noises that come from the daily labor and making a living. What did your heart used to say before noises thickened? I do not know about you, but my heart is beating fast because it remembered how to get to my ears.

*As I ‘read’ the photos, the
forgotten things returned
with the tears I used to cry back
when I was still dreaming.*

The time takes us away. We are not informed of the destination but we follow anyway. We go through alleys and clime up and down the hills of life. With these photos, I suddenly came to a halt. I wanted to come to a halt and look back. All the alleys and hills and valleys. I wanted to find out if my heart was still talking. It is like remembering old friends who were buried inside an album. Growing up is a sad thing. It is about making choices, and making choices means sacrificing what we used to love. But let us not forget. The things may come and go, but we can choose to remember. There were moments when our dreams shined. And remember here are photos of Jinyeong Lee. They make your past, thrown away, sacrificed and forgotten moments come back, in my case with tears, too. They brought me back on my feet. Firmer than ever. I owe her a meal.

Artist's Note

**Nothing in this world
is perfect. Not even close.
That is why I take
all the moments of
imperfection.**

Jinyeong Lee

There cannot be something completely new in this world. We just discover something out of luck or out of fate. That 'something' is always there but we fail to take notice.

My work begins when I finally notice that something. I employ Ambrotype technique, one of wet collodion processes, to express things that are fading such as disappearing clouds, compromised dreams and withering flowers.

I should let you know a little bit about my creative process so you could better understand my work. It is not raw photography but it is also not imaginative fabrication. It is between the two. The reality captured by the camera interacts with my imagination. What I want to convey to my audience is my experience as a whole. What my eyes see and what my mind sees at the same time.

I also try to reflect my old experiences onto my work. That is why I employ all sorts of techniques when processing and finalizing landscapes, people and objects I took picture of. For example, I create an image by firstly re-shooting a negative photo image of glass plate-negative that was originally created from a 4x5inch glass plate, then secondly converting it to a 4x5inch positive film on a transparent printing paper, and finally overlaying it over and over again. By doing so, unintentional and unexpected colors and tones are added to what was achromatic, producing an image that I never supposed.

The privilege of being a photographer is discovering such images and moments out of nowhere. I cannot realize more that my expectations are short and limited. That is how I learn what life is. This way or that, we could plan our paths but adhering to them is a different story. We know that already but do we really? As I live on and accumulate lessons, what fades away is the belief in 'my way.' There is no such a thing.

I titled my exhibition, [Clouds, Flowers and Dreams]. But what really wanted to present was probably our life. I did not know the real purpose or the intention at the start. The truth emerged slowly as my work was approaching the final stage. Well, better late than never. At least, I found out what I really wanted and I could stay true to myself, my work and my viewers. I wish the truth finds you, too. I hope it creates resonance in you. I would like you to collect stories to tell. I cannot want more.