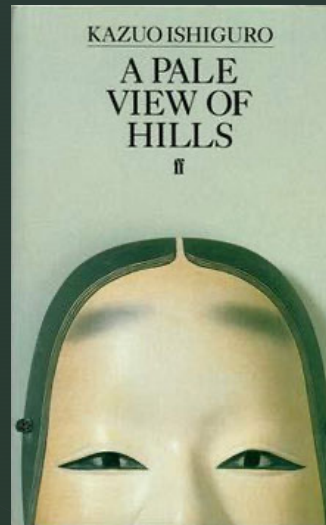


<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kagoEGKHZvU>

ENGL 10: Global Fictions

▶
Class #10: *A
Pale View of Hills*
1/2

Ask me about majoring in English! jjjeon@uci.edu



IMPORTANT PSA!!!!

- There is a subtle but important twist at the end of this novel. 1) Watch for it. 2) If you have already finished it, no spoilers!

Thursday, 7th November—

Beyond the Indian hamlet, upon a forlorn strand, I happened on a trail of recent footprints. Through rotting kelp, sea cocoa-nuts & bamboo, the tracks led me to their maker, a White man, his trowsers & Pea-jacket rolled up, sporting a kempt beard & an outsized Beaver, shoveling & sifting the cindery sand with a teaspoon so intently that he noticed me only after I had hailed him from ten yards away. Thus it was, I made the acquaintance of Dr. Henry Goose, surgeon to the London nobility. His nationality was no surprise. If there be any eyrie so desolate, or isle so remote, that one may there resort unchallenged by an Englishman, 'tis not down on any map I ever saw.

Had the doctor misplaced any
Could I render assistance? Dr. G
loose his 'kerchief & displayed its co

Kweku dies barefoot on a Sunday before sunrise, his slippers by the doorway to the bedroom like dogs. At the moment he is on the threshold between sunroom and garden considering whether to go back to get them. He won't. His second wife Ama is asleep in that bedroom, her lips parted loosely, her brow lightly furrowed, her cheek hotly seeking some cool patch of pillow, and he doesn't want to wake her.

He couldn't if he tried.

She sleeps like a cocoyam. A thing without senses. She sleeps like his mother, unplugged from the world. Their house could be robbed—by Nigerians in flip-flops rolling right up to their door in rusting Russian Army tanks, eschewing subtlety entirely as they've taken to doing

from his friends: the crude oil kings

Chapter One

Niki, the name we finally gave my younger daughter, is not an abbreviation; it was a compromise I reached with her father. For paradoxically it was he who wanted to give her a Japanese name, and I — perhaps out of some selfish desire not to be reminded of the past — insisted on an English one. He finally agreed to Niki, thinking it had some vague echo of the East about it.

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First paragraphs

Reluctant narrator

resistance to knowledge

Chapter One

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She came to see me earlier this year, in April, when the days were still cold and drizzly. Perhaps she had intended to stay longer, I do not know. But my country house and the quiet that surrounds it made her restless, and before long I could see she was anxious to return to her life in London. She listened impatiently to my classical records, flicked through numerous magazines. The telephone rang for her regularly, and she would stride across the carpet, her thin figure squeezed into her tight clothes, taking care to close the door behind her so I would not overhear her conversation. She left after five days.

She did not mention Keiko until the second day. It was a grey windy morning, and we had moved the armchairs nearer the windows to watch the rain falling on my garden.

"Did you expect me to be there?" she asked. "At the funeral, I mean."

"No, I suppose not. I didn't really think you'd come."

"It did upset me, hearing about her. I almost came."

"I never expected you to come."

"People didn't know what was wrong with me," she said. "I didn't tell anybody. I suppose I was embarrassed. They wouldn't understand really, they wouldn't under-

stand how I felt about it. Sisters are supposed to be people you're close to, aren't they. You may not like them much, but you're still close to them. That's just not how it was though. I don't even remember what she looked like now."

"Yes, it's quite a time since you saw her."

"I just remember her as someone who used to make me miserable. That's what I remember about her. But I was sad though, when I heard."

Perhaps it was not just the quiet that drove my daughter back to London. For although we never dwelt long on the subject of Keiko's death, it was never far away, hovering over us whenever we talked.

Keiko, unlike Niki, was pure Japanese, and more than one newspaper was quick to pick up on this fact. The English are fond of their idea that our race has an instinct for suicide, as if further explanations are unnecessary; for that was all they reported, that she was Japanese and that she had hung herself in her room.

Mrs Fujiwara's face often grew weary when she talked about her son.

"He's becoming an old man," she was saying. "Soon he'll have only the old maids to choose from."

We were sitting in the forecourt of her noodle shop. Several tables were occupied by office-workers having their lunch.

"Poor Kazuo-San," I said, with a laugh. "But I can understand how he feels. It was so sad about Miss Michiko. And they were engaged for a long time, weren't they?"

"Three years. I never saw the point in these long engagements. Yes, Michiko was a nice girl. I'm sure she'd be the first to agree with me about Kazuo mourning her like this. She would have wanted him to continue with his life."

"It must be difficult for him though. To have built up plans for so long only for things to end like that."

"But that's all in the past now," said Mrs Fujiwara. "We've all had to put things behind us. You too, Etsuko, I remember you were very heartbroken once. But you managed to carry on."

"Yes, but I was fortunate. Ogata-San was very kind to me in those days. I don't know what would have become of me otherwise."

"Yes, he was very kind to you. And of course, that's how you met your husband. But you deserved to be fortunate."

"I really don't know where I'd be today if Ogata-San hadn't taken me in. But I can understand how difficult it must be — for your son, I mean. Even me I still think about Nakamura-San sometimes. I can't help it. Sometimes I wake up and forget. I think I'm still back here, here in Nakagawa . . ."

"Now, Etsuko, that's no way to talk." Mrs Fujiwara looked at me for some moments, then gave a sigh. "But it happens to me too. Like you say, in the mornings, just as

you wake, it can catch you unawares. I often wake up thinking I'll have to hurry and get breakfast ready for them all."

We fell silent for a moment. Then Mrs Fujiwara laughed a little.

"You're very bad, Etsuko," she said. "See, you've got me talking like this now."

"It's very foolish of me," I said. "In any case, Nakamura-San and I, there was never anything between us. I mean, nothing had been decided."

Mrs Fujiwara went on looking at me, nodding to some private train of thought. Then across the forecourt a customer stood up, ready to leave.

I watched Mrs Fujiwara go over to him, a neat young man in shirt-sleeves. They bowed to each other and began chatting cheerfully. The man made some remark as he buttoned his briefcase and Mrs Fujiwara laughed heartily. They exchanged bows once more, then he disappeared into the afternoon rush. I was grateful for the opportunity to compose my emotions. When Mrs Fujiwara came back, I said:

"I'd better be leaving you soon. You're very busy just now."

"You just stay there and relax. You've only just sat down. I'll get you some lunch."

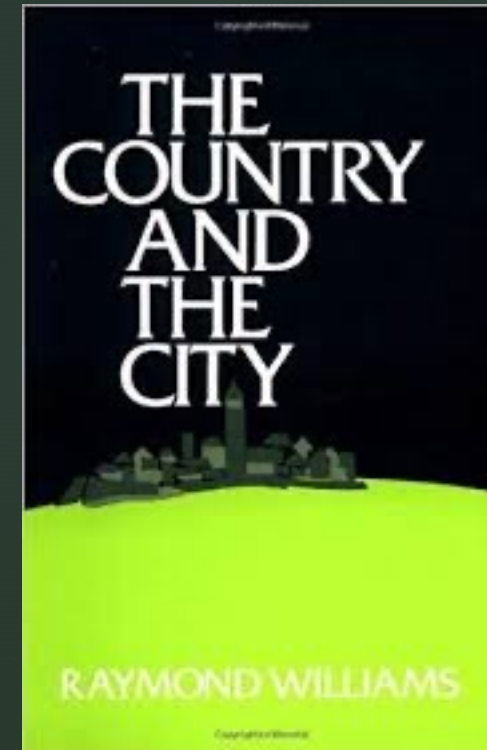
"No, that's all right."
"Now, Etsuko, if you don't eat here, you won't eat lunch for another hour. You know how important it is for you to eat regularly at this stage."

"Yes, I suppose so."
Mrs Fujiwara looked at me closely for a moment. Then she said: "You've everything to look forward to now, Etsuko. What are you so unhappy about?"

"Unhappy? But I'm not unhappy in the least."
She continued to look at me, and I laughed nervously. "Once the child comes," she said, "you'll be delighted, believe me. And you'll make a splendid mother, Etsuko."

The Country and the City

She came to see me earlier this year, in April, when the days were still cold and drizzly. Perhaps she had intended to stay longer, I do not know. But my country house and the quiet that surrounds it made her restless, and before long I could see she was anxious to return to her life in London. She listened impatiently to my classical records, flicked through numerous magazines. The telephone rang for her regularly, and she would stride across the carpet, her thin figure squeezed into her tight clothes, taking care to close the door behind her so I would not overhear her conversation. She left after five days.



The Country and the City (in Japan)

The worst days were over by then. American soldiers were as numerous as ever — for there was fighting in Korea — but in Nagasaki, after what had gone before, those were days of calm and relief. The world had a feeling of change about it.

My husband and I lived in an area to the east of the city, a short tram journey from the centre of town. A river ran near us, and I was once told that before the war a small village had grown up on the riverbank. But then the bomb had fallen and afterwards all that remained were charred ruins. Rebuilding had got under way and in time four concrete buildings had been erected, each containing forty or so separate apartments. Of the four, our block had been built last and it marked the point where the rebuilding programme had come to a halt; between us and the river lay an expanse of wasteground, several acres of dried mud and ditches. Many complained it was a health hazard, and indeed the drainage was appalling. All year round there were craters filled with stagnant water, and in the summer months the mosquitoes became intolerable. From time to time officials were to be seen pacing out measurements or scribbling down notes, but the months went by and nothing was done.

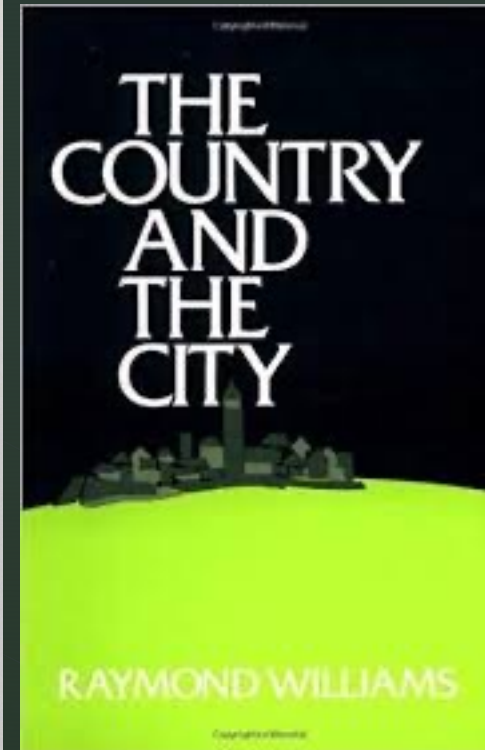
The occupants of the apartment blocks were much like

ourselves — young married couples, the husbands having found good employment with expanding firms. Many of the apartments were owned by the firms, who rented them to employees at a generous rate. Each apartment was identical; the floors were tatami, the bathrooms and kitchens of a Western design. They were small and rather difficult to keep cool during the warmer months, but on the whole the feeling amongst the occupants seemed one of satisfaction. And yet I remember an unmistakable air of transience there, as if we were all of us waiting for the day we could move to something better.

One wooden cottage had survived both the devastation of the war and the government bulldozers. I could see it from our window, standing alone at the end of that expanse of wasteground, practically on the edge of the river. It was the kind of cottage often seen in the countryside, with a tiled roof sloping almost to the ground. Often, during my empty moments, I would stand at my window gazing at it.

To judge from the attention attracted by Sachiko's arrival, I was not alone in gazing at that cottage. There was much talk about two men seen working there one day — as to whether or not they were government workers. Later there was talk that a woman and her little girl were living there, and I saw them myself on several occasions, making their way across the ditchy ground.

It was towards the beginning of summer — I was in my third or fourth month of pregnancy —





Nagasaki before and after the bomb.





**The
Guardian**

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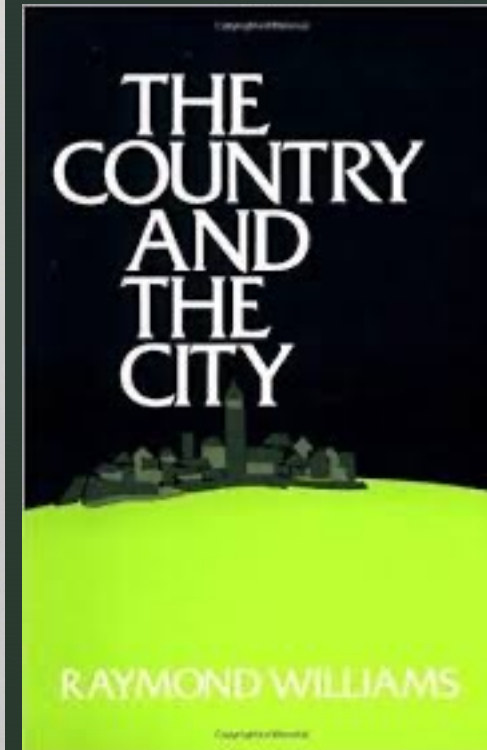
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repression



a mad girl."

"They couldn't have thought too badly of you. After all, I ended up with you marrying Jiro. Now come on, Etsuko, enough of this. Play me something."

"What was I like in those days, Father? Was I like a mad person?"

"You were very shocked, which was only to be expected. We were all shocked, those of us who were left. Now, Etsuko, let's forget these things. I'm sorry I ever brought up the matter."

I brought the instrument up to my chin once more. "Ah," he said, "Mendelssohn."

I remained like that for several seconds, the violin under my chin. Then I brought it down to my lap and sighed. "I hardly play it now," I said.

"I'm sorry, Etsuko." Ogata-San's voice had become solemn. "Perhaps I shouldn't have touched it."

I looked up at him and smiled. "So," I said, "the little child is feeling guilty now."

"It's just that I saw it up there and I remembered it from those days."

"I'll play it for you another time. After I've practised a little."

He gave me a small bow, and the smile returned to his eyes.

"I'll remember you promised, Etsuko. And perhaps you could teach me a little."

"I can't teach you everything, Father. You said you wanted to learn to cook."

"Ah yes. That too."

"I'll play for you the next time you come to stay with us."

"I'll remember you promised," he said.

After supper that evening, Jiro and his father settled down to their game of chess. I cleared up the supper things and

Repression Sublimation

sublimate verb



Save Word

sub·li·mate | \ 'sə-blə-māt \

sublimated; sublimating

Definition of *sublimate* (Entry 1 of 2)

transitive verb

- a** : [SUBLIME](#) sense 1
- b** *archaic* : to improve or refine as if by [subliming](#)

- 2** : to divert the expression of (an instinctual desire or impulse) from its unacceptable form to one that is considered more socially or culturally acceptable

intransitive verb

: to pass directly from the solid to the vapor state : [SUBLIME](#)

glimpsed inside, I had seen countless glossy magazines lying on the floor amidst heaps of clothes. I had to coax her to put out her laundry, and in this at least we reached an understanding: every few weeks I would find a bag of washing outside her door, which I would wash and return. In the end, the rest of us grew used to her ways, and when by some impulse Keiko ventured down into our living room, we would all feel a great tension. Invariably, these excursions would end with her fighting, with Niki or with my husband, and then she would be back in her room.

I never saw Keiko's room in Manchester, the room in which she died. It may seem morbid of a mother to have such thoughts, but on hearing of her suicide, the first thought that ran through my mind — before I registered even the shock — was to wonder how long she had been there like that before they had found her. She had lived amidst her own family without being seen for days on end; little hope she would be discovered quickly in a strange city where no one knew her. Later, the coroner said she had been there "for several days". It was the landlady who had opened the door, thinking Keiko had left without paying the rent.

I have found myself continually bringing to mind that picture — of my daughter hanging in her room for days on end. The horror of that image has never diminished, but it has long ceased to be a morbid matter; as with a wound on one's own body, it is possible to develop an intimacy with the most disturbing of things.

"I'll probably be warmer in the spare room anyhow," Niki said.

"If you're cold at night, Niki, you can simply turn up the heating."

Negation

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