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KATHRYN HEMMANN
ORIGINAL AUTHOR – MURAKAMI HARUKI

Murakami Haruki (b. 1949) is a writer and translator whose novels, short stories, and essays have garnered international acclaim and secured his position in the canon of postmodern literature.

Murakami's most recent work to appear in English translation is the three-part novel *1Q84*, which handles themes such as the degree of individual agency in a society in which information is carefully controlled by powers much larger than any one person. The three short stories translated here are drawn from a volume titled *Yoru no kumozaru* (The monkey in the night), which collects the flash fiction Murakami wrote in 1994 and 1995 for serialized advertising campaigns sponsored by J. Press and the Parker Pen Company. Although Japanese critics have claimed that Murakami's prose style is distinctly American, the challenge of translating this prose lies in how to render the writer's numerous colloquialisms and wordplays into an English idiom that is as engaging and flexible as that of the original Japanese.

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馬が切符を売っている世界

五月七日（金曜日）

私はお父さんに「ねえお父さん、ヒトは死んだらどこに行くの？」ときいてみました。まえからそのことがけっこう気になっていたからです。お父さんはしばらくかんがえてから、「ヒトは死んだら、馬がきっぷを売っている世界に行って、そこで馬からきっぷを買って電車にのって、おベントウを食べるんだよ。おベントウにはちくわと、こぶまきと、キャベツのせんぎりがはいっているんだ」といいました。私はそれについてしばらくかんがえてみました。でもどうして死んだあとでちくわとこぶまきをたべなくてはならないのか、よくわかりませんでした。だって去年おばあちゃんが死んだとき、私たちはみなでトクジョウのお寿司をとって食べたのです。なのにどうして死んだヒトはちくわとこぶまきとキャベツしかたべられないのでしょうか。そんなのはフコウヘイのような気がします。私がそういうとお父さんは「ヒトは死んだらどういうわけかちくわとこぶまきとキャベツがたべたくなるものなんだよ。そういうものなんだ」といいました。

「それからどうなの。おベントウを食べたあとで？」と私はきいてみました。

「電車がしゅうてんにつくと、そこでおまえは電車をおりるんだよ。それからまたべつの馬からべつのきっぷを買って、べつの電車にのるんだよ」とお父さんはいいました。

「それでまたちくわとこぶまきとキャベツのおベントウを食べるんでしょう？」と私のがまんできずにさげびました。私はもうちくわとこぶまきとキャベツなんて見たくもなかったからです。だから私はお父さんにむかってあっかんべえをして、「へんだ、そんなもの私はたべませんからね」といいました。

するとお父さんはじっと私をにらみました。それはもうお父さんではなくて馬でした。そのお父さんの馬は手にきっぷをもっていました。「ひひんひひん、わがままいうんじゃない。おまえはこのきっぷを私から買って電車にのって、いつまでもいつまでもいつまでもちくわとこぶまきとキャベツのせんぎりを食べるんだよ、ひひんひひん」

私は怖くて怖くてわあわあと泣きました。しばらくすると、お父さんはまた馬からお父さんに戻りました。「さあ泣くんじゃない、これからふたりでマクドナルドにバーガーを食べにいこう」とお父さんはやさしい声でいいました。それで私はやっと泣くのをやめました。

A WORLD WHERE HORSES SELL TICKETS

TRANSLATION BY KATHRYN HEMMANN

May 7 (Friday)

I asked my dad, "Hey Dad, where do people go when they die?" This had been really bothering me for quite some time. My dad thought for a while and said, "When people die, they go to a world where there's a horse selling tickets, and you buy a ticket from him and then get on a train, and you eat a packed lunch. In your packed lunch you've got some rolled-up fish cakes, some kelp sushi rolls, and some shredded cabbage." I thought about this for a while, but I didn't understand why you had to eat rolled-up fish cakes and kelp sushi after you died. I mean, when my grandmother died last year, everybody got to eat really fancy sushi. So why do you only get to eat rolled up fish cakes and kelp sushi and cabbage if you're the one who died? I felt like this was just *unfair*. When I told this to my dad, he said, "When people die, they want to eat fish cakes and kelp sushi and cabbage. That's just how it is."

"And then what happens? What happens after you've eaten all that?" I asked.

"When the train reaches the last stop, you get off the train, and then you buy another ticket from another horse, and then you get on another train," my dad said.

"And then do you eat another packed lunch with more fish cakes and more kelp sushi and more cabbage?" I shouted immediately, because I didn't even want to think about more fish cakes and kelp sushi and cabbage. I stuck out my tongue at my dad and said, "Because I'm not gonna eat that stuff."

My father glared at me. He wasn't my dad anymore; he was a horse. The horse who was my father was holding a ticket. "*Doneight* be such a brat. You're going to buy this ticket from me and get on the train, and then you're going to eat rolled-up fish cakes and kelp sushi rolls and shredded cabbage for *eterneighty*."

I was so, so scared, and I started bawling. After a while my father turned back from a horse into my dad. "Hey, don't cry, let's go to McDonald's and eat some hamburgers," he said in a kind voice, and I finally stopped crying.