

**Futurity Diary**  
**“Return of the Rakkorings”**

**Written**

**By**

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I returned home in Rakkoring after 15 years. The dear Rakkoring house was still intact: the parking lot in front of the entrance, the cobblestone entrance approach, worn-out trash box, the old-fashioned bronze outdoor lights and mailbox, the family entrance walkway, the semi-cylindrical bay windows that climb up all the way to the second floor, and the peaked, large and small triangular roof mountains. For the first five years when my family left Rakkoring and moved to Vancouver in Canada, we came back at least once a year, but as the years went by, we came back home less often. And for the next 10 years we did not return to Rakkoring. For the first five years, there was a day service office for children with disabilities on the first floor of Rakkoring, but after this office went out of business, another office planned to use it, but the plan did not proceed. By this time, Lin was able to earn enough money to live in Canada by working as a registered nurse, and we no longer had to rely on tenant fees, which was one of the reasons why we could not decide on a new successor.

I walked to the family front door. I tried to open the door, but it was difficult to unlock it because I hadn't used it for a long time, and after trial and error, I was finally able to open it. When I entered the entrance, the dust flew up that had been sleeping quietly for many years, and the nostalgic scent of Rakkoring spread all around. I put my shoes in the shoebox at the entrance and climbed the stairs in front of it. Then Milin, a Siam hybrid cat, leaned over the beam of the loft and greeted my return, as she had used to do before. After slowly climbing the stairs, there is a short corridor to the left and there is a living room door and a short door-way. To the left of the door-way was a closet that contained my winter coats, various medicines, and my underwears.

The room was dark with blinds blocking the spring sunlight, but the living room seemed to be the same as before. In the center of the living room was a sofa, and along the opposite wall were stacks of my daughter's bookcase and my CDs and DVDs. It brought back memories

of Lyndo repeatedly being disciplined while she was reluctant to clean up her bookshelf. Every time I noticed her, I remembered that Lyndo would reply "yes, yes" in bothersome voice or give an unreasonable reason, as if it happened just yesterday. There is a small computer rack behind the sofa with the computers and printers I used for medical examinations. On the north side of the living room there is a not large kitchen room, and there is a counter separating the living room from the kitchen. On the counter, there are several family photos, mainly photos from the birth of Lyndo to the age of six. There is a dining table in the living room along the counter. At mealtime, I used to sit on the long edge of the table, with Lin sitting on my left side and Lyndo sitting on my right. Family laughter and occasional quarrels also unfolded around this small table in the family theater of the Rakkorings.

In this kitchen, Lin entertained my family by making many treats. Lin always said that she was not a good cook, but she was always impressed that she could cook such delicious food in a small kitchen. The north side of the kitchen is a window. Since the car repair factory was located north of Rakkoring, we were troubled by continuous loud noises and strange odors, and we were annoyed especially on days when work continued after 7 pm. Therefore, the windows were closed while the factory was in operation.

There was a sink and laundry in a chamber on the east side of the kitchen, and a bathroom facing the laundry. There was a washing area and a bathtub in the bathroom, and there was a speaker on the wall of the bathtub, so I could soak in the hot water and relax my body while listening to the radio music. Also, there is a drying platform about the size of 'a cat's forehead' on the east outside of the house, and during a few years when I first opened the clinical office of Rakkoring, I would do my best to start the interviews with patients from the next morning after washing and drying at the last night.

On the south side of the living room is the bedroom.

There is a king-size bed and a semi-round bay window on the south side of the bedroom. Since Lyndo was born, this bed has been used by Lin and Lyndo. I used the sofa in the living room as a bed. The bay window is hung with mesh curtains that glow in astringent gold, outside of which glossy black curtains close solemnly. Milin sneaked into the bedroom under our watchful eyes, standing dignified on the shelf of the bay window and watching passengers on the road in front of our house. Some passers-by turned their attention to the cat on the windowsill. There was also an electronic piano by the window, and Lyndo was giving piano lessons for 10 minutes in the morning. I started taking piano lessons at her own request, but because she has the dexterity to play quite difficult tunes without much practice, it became noticeable that she neglected to practice, so I quit the lessons when I moved to Canada.

There is a staircase along the south wall of the living room, and we can go up there to the loft. When Lyndo grew up, I consulted with Lin to make it a children's room for Lyndo, and installed a new staircase. There is a bookshelf containing my books on the north side of the loft, and a small stereo component is placed above it. Until she was five years old, I held 'the Royal Rakkoring Concert' from time to time. At the concert, Lyndo played the piano, Lin read a book, and I played my own composition. The happy laughter of the Rakkoring family still echoes in the loft. I went down to the living room and sat in a recliner placed beside the sofa. A large screen TV is placed in front of the chair. It reminded me of the time when Lyndo went to a nursery school or children's school, and on weekdays when Lin and I were alone after the morning examination, we used to have lunch and doze off while watching a recorded TV programs. I was tired from the medical examination, but I think it was a calm afternoon break.

While I was resting in my chair, two cats came down from the loft with light footsteps. They are Milin and Rakkoring. I shortened the name of Rakkoring as Ratch. Milin is a Siamese cat hybrid, and in Shiga, Lin's homeland,

her niece found a kitten crying in the mud, and Lin's mother brought this kitten held on her chest by bullet train 'Shinkansen'. Perhaps because of the Siamese bloodline, the face, ears, fore/hind legs, and tail are black, and the torso is whitish gray. She has blue eyes and is a very beautiful cat. Although it may also be a characteristic of Siamese, she is very friendly and promptly angry. She was sometimes problematic such as falling from the loft beam and nearly fatally injured, scratching wallpaper when frustrated, and sneaking into the closet to bite off toilet paper and clothes. Ratch is a cat with a venerable American Shorthair bloodline, and shortly after Milin came to our house, Lin found him at a pet store, and because its appearance resembled Rakkoring's signature cat, he is an expensive but the two of us liked and bought him. It was dignified and imposing. Despite this, Ratch was a timid cat, freaked out and ran away at the slightest noise, which was in contrast to Milin.

As usual, Milin sits on my lap and grooms me as if it were a natural place to be. Ratch is resting on the armrest of the sofa, scratching with the nails of both arms on the cloth of the sofa like stretching. The spring sunlight reflected off the house dust through the lighted windows on the south wall, stroking my face with a dazzling shimmer, and there was the usual calm daily life of Rakkoring. However, the absence of two lively lovable women made me feel even more lonely.

The lonely days have passed quietly for ten years since I returned home. I got used to living with cats and didn't feel unnatural in this life. One day, the front door for the family opened, and I heard a loud cheerful voice, "Now, I came back home!" which has been memorized in my mind since past. I was thrilled and said, "Welcome back!" I answered in voice as loud as hers. The person making the shout comes up the stairs. The door to the living room opened, revealing a bright smile. Lin is back. Ten years of loneliness disappeared in an instant. We hugged each other tightly, and I almost said, "You're late," but I swallowed

these words and instead said, "You do best every day, much appreciated!" She asked, "You were lonely by yourself, weren't you?" I replied vaguely, "No, because I have been with two pretty cats." The lively life with Lin will return to what it was 10 years ago. I am very happy. And Lin's delicious home-cooked food, gentle care, infuriating anger, and forgetfulness that didn't care as if they didn't exist are back.

I'm glad that Lin came back early, but I was hesitant to ask why. For the time being, I put off the difficult talk and talked about the nostalgic days and asked about the growth of Lyndo. Lyndo had entered to a university with the aim of becoming a zoologist, which she had loved since childhood, and probably because she was not satisfied with it and has been influenced by our professional jobs, thereafter she entered a medical school. Lyndo is a smart child, so it was satisfying us for her to challenge various possibilities. After graduating from the medical school in Canada, she went to a research institute in the United States, but she was active and was involved in various other activities. With the luck of her good appearances and excellent singing ability, she is also famous world-widely as an entertainer.

Eleven years ago, Lin became ill and was examined at the hospital to find that she had the same pancreatic cancer as his mother's. Lin's mother refused chemotherapy and surgical operation, and enjoyed one year in good health under the watchful eyes of her family and medical staff, and endured the last few months of her fighting pains and living a joyful life with the encouragement of her family. Lin also refused active treatments. After receiving this news, Lyndo returned from the United States and was taking care of Lin. Lin seemed to be doing very well, just like her mother. Even though she was able to spend a good time, she looked to become a little thin, but when I saw her bright smile, I didn't think she was sick.

And so, the life of four family members, Lin and I with two cats, began. Just like before we left Japan, our ordinary

life restarted where I said she prepared meals and I took care of the cats. Lin was a nurse in Canada for many years, but after falling ill, she retired and spent time in a quiet and spectacular lakeside house. Unlike her busy life in the past, she seemed to be able to lead a calm life for the first time. Looking back on her previous activities, she felt satisfied but also excited in mind about further challenges. However, she did not give in to the decline of her body, and her will to take on the challenge gradually turned into an endless dream.

A few months after she returned, we heard the front door-lock open. When I went out to the front door, there was a beautiful and dignified woman. Lin also hurriedly descended the stairs to meet Lyndo. She slipped past us and went up to the second floor. Lyndo had lived here until she was six years old, and she looked around the living room as if trying to trace her old memories. Lin and I watched her quietly.

She approached the bookshelves containing animal books and picture books that Lyndo had been intimate with as a toddler, and nostalgically traced the spines of those books. And she was looking at the pictures on the wall and on the counter in the living room. There were babies, angels, Elsa, and Lyndo who was happy surrounded by her parents. The many nostalgic memories made teardrops spill from Lyndo's big eyes. That's right, at this moment, the Rakkorings of three people and two cats are gathered in Rakkoring as in the old days. There was a long way since departure from Rakkoring. There were many trials and joys. Finally, we all reached Rakkoring.

Lin and I, as well as Milin and Ratch, are sitting on the sofa and watching over Lyndo. Lyndo carried her suitcase from the ground floor to her bedroom. The bright early summer sunlight shines through the semi-round bay windows. She walks beside a small digital piano and touches the keys. I wonder if she reminds her of the time when she hesitated and embarrassed us while she practiced the piano for 10 minutes in the morning at 3 or 4 years old.

Eventually, when we moved to Canada, I stopped taking piano lessons, but she started practicing again in the second year of elementary school. On the bed, there were stuffed lions and cats that Lyndo always slept in his arms, waiting for their master's return. Lyndo was hugging the lion and stroking its mane. The bedroom was full of her childhood dreams.

Lin and I looked at each other and smiled. Reaffirming the world that is taking root in Lyndo's mind, we could infer clearly that she is feeling the relief and joy arising up. She was hugging a picture of her two grandmothers, Lin, and me. Will she live in Rakkoring from now on, or will she return home temporarily? For a while, I talked with Lin to see how it was going.

The day after Lyndo returned to Rakkoring, she took out two small boxes from her travel bag. Two boxes were wrapped each in a beautiful cloth. She is putting them in her handbag and going out. A small rental car was parked in the parking lot of Rakkoring, and Lyndo got into that car. We also piggybacked on it. She set the navigation system and started running. The town was completely different from when we lived. There were several high-rise condominiums along the road in the front, and the shopping mart that had been there for a long time was a new building. There were more cars on the street, and it was surprisingly different from when we had been.

There are more floating cars than ground vehicles, and we can feel the changes of the times. Lyndo entrusts Navi to drive the car. It seems that we have arrived at our destination in no time. We also had some memories of this place. From the characteristics of the building, I knew that it was the temple where my parents' graves were located, but now there was a tall building like a tower parking lot neighboring it. Lyndo floated her car and parked it in the parking lot on the 5th floor. Lyndo got out of the car, went to the reception panel, and told a virtual reception girl of the panel her name. After a while, the booth door opened and the blue light on the door frame flashed, so Lyndo



walked into the booth. There was a screen panel and a small window, and Lyndo put two small boxes that she had brought with her into the small window according to the instruction of panel reception girl. The conveyor belt moved and carried the caskets to the back. Eventually, my mother Kazuko and father Michiyoshi appeared on the screen as holograms. And the figures of Lin's parents also appeared. The two parents seemed to be smiling at Lyndo. Until then, Lyndo and we had been in Lyndo's side, but at the instant, we were on the screen alongside our parents. We were facing Lyndo across the screen. Lyndo was talking to us with large drops of tear trickling down from her eyes. We wished her good health and success in the future, watching over her always and said voicelessly her final goodbyes with a smile.