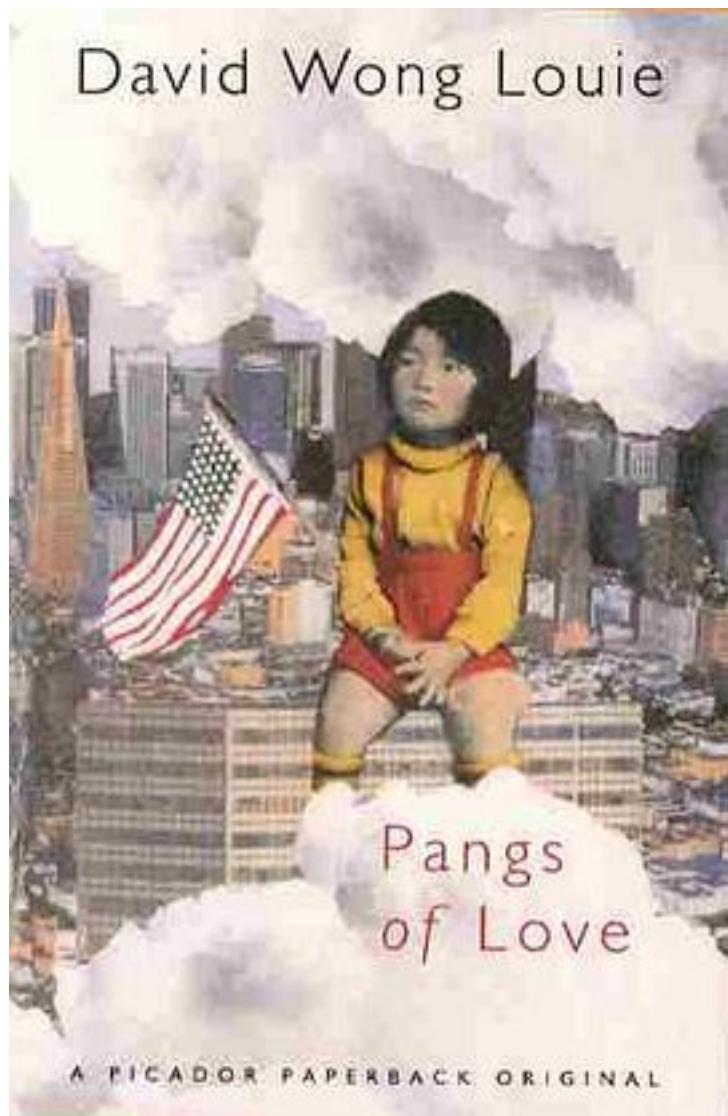


# Pangs Of Love



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著者:David Wong Louie

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In this notable debut collection of 11 stories, Louie paces off the perimeters of alienation as he portrays a series of characters emotionally imprisoned and isolated, many by their attitudes toward their Asian backgrounds. The protagonist of "Displacement" (included in *The Best American Short Stories 1989*) is Mrs. Chow, a formerly aristocratic immigrant to America who now must work as nursemaid to a disagreeable old lady. In "Bottle of Beaujolais," a story involving an otter in the window of a sushi bar, the narrator who is his keeper muses about controlling the otter's environment: "I was the north wind, the cumulonimbus, the offshore breeze, the ozone layer." Later, he succumbs to an obsession with an unknown woman who frequently passes the restaurant window, and the results are chaotic and surreal. The title story is a powerful portrait of a family splintered by generational differences of culture and sexual orientation. The narrator works for a company that makes almost magical-sounding flavors and fragrances. When he rages over his mother's simpleminded pleasure in watching Johnny Carson although she speaks no English after 40 years in America, he concludes, "What I need is a spray that smells of mankind's worst fears, something on the order of canned Hiroshima, a mist of organic putrefaction, that I'll spritz whenever the audience laughs. That'll teach her." Louie transmutes rage and bitterness into an impressive matrix of plot and character conveyed in biting prose.

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雷祖威 (David Wong Louie)<sup>1</sup> 的短篇故事集 《愛之慟》 (Pangs of Love) 出版於一九九一年六月,贏得該年度兩項大獎: 《洛杉磯時報》 的賽登邦 (Art Seidenbaum) 頭本小說獎與 《犁頭》 雜誌

(Ploughshares) 的查克瑞 (John C. Zacharis) 處女作獎。《創造歷史》 (Making History) 一書的作者卡洛琳.西 (Carolyn See) 認為

雷祖威獲頒第一屆賽登邦頭本小說獎實至名歸,她讚揚雷以獨特風格打破了華裔美國男子的沈默:「他的文筆優雅、措辭巧妙、有格調、旁徵博引。句句呈現凝煉的痛苦 (the agony of intense distillation),段段完美地調和了自信、自我懷疑及自我折磨」 (1991: 11)。

著名的亞美文學學者黃秀玲 (Sau-ling Cynthia Wong) 指出,《愛之慟》 裡的故事不僅「呈現當代內涵,也顯示出與眾不同的聲音和感性。其文字犀利、時髦、優雅、流暢而間接,時常流露出黑色幽默和超現實的幻想」 (1995: 182)。任教於加州大學聖地牙哥校區的 駱里山 (Lisa Lowe)<sup>2</sup> 在其書評結尾亦讚揚雷祖威的故事「趣味橫生且技巧優異」 (1996: 256)。

《愛之慟》 共收錄十一個短篇故事,其中〈驚天動地〉

(“Disturbing the Universe”) 是一則寓言,以中國的萬里長城為背

景,其餘十篇的故事情節都是發生在美國,這些故事的主要角色大多是男性,其中有些可以分辨出是華裔,有些則族裔身分不明。

不過,他們都講得一口流利的英語,而且熟悉雷根時代的美國;他們觀看宗毓華 (Connie Chung)、強尼.卡森 (Johnny Carson)、丹.

拉瑟 (Dan Rather) 的電視節目,以及紐約洋基隊對克利夫蘭紅人

隊的棒球實況轉播;他們暢談當代演員倍蒂.戴維斯 (Bette Davis)、愛德華.羅賓森 (Edward G. Robinson) 及小山姆.戴維 (Sammy Davis,

Jr.)。他們從事多種不同的行業,包括教授、作家、化學家、咖啡館老闆、服務生、廣告藝術家、電玩程式設計師、屍體整容化妝師(dermasurgeon)。雷祖威在《愛之慟》中詳細刻劃這些中產階級人士在結交異性(或同性)朋友時,如何遭遇代溝與跨種族的愛情鴻溝的雙重困境。

作者介绍:

雷祖威 (David Wong Louie, 1955—) 在他的畅销短篇小说集《爱的痛苦》 (Pangs of Love, 1991) 里, 观察强势文化与弱势文化的冲撞, 而这种冲撞产生于华裔青年内化强势文化 (白人文化) 后与仍坚守弱势文化 (中国文化) 的老年一代之间难以调和的矛盾。雷祖威在这部短篇小说集里活画出处于美国边缘文化的华裔的种种心态。

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