

《The Death of the Moth》 by [Virginia Woolf](#)

Moths that fly by day are not properly to be called moths; they do not excite that pleasant sense of dark autumn nights and ivy-blossom which the commonest yellow-underwing asleep in the shadow of the curtain never fails to rouse in us. They are hybrid creatures, neither gay like butterflies nor sombre like their own species. Nevertheless the present specimen, with his narrow hay-coloured wings, fringed with a tassel of the same colour, seemed to be content with life. It was a pleasant morning, mid-September, mild, benignant, yet with a keener breath than that of the summer months. The plough was already scoring the field opposite the window, and where the share had been, the earth was pressed flat and gleamed with moisture. Such vigour came rolling in from the fields and the down beyond that it was difficult to keep the eyes strictly turned upon the book. The rooks too were keeping one of their annual festivities; soaring round the tree tops until it looked as if a vast net with thousands of black knots in it had been cast up into the air; which, after a few moments sank slowly down upon the trees until every twig seemed to have a knot at the end of it. Then, suddenly, the net would be thrown into the air again in a wider circle this time, with the utmost clamour and vociferation, as though to be thrown into the air and settle slowly down upon the tree tops were a tremendously exciting experience.

蛾之死 (Elaine Tsoi 譯)

在白天出現的蛾也許不應喚作蛾；每次看見那最普通不過的飛蛾，在窗窻暗影中憩睡的樣子，心中便不期然升起暗暗秋夜和串串長春籐帶來的舒快感。白天的飛蛾却從沒有帶來這種聯想。牠們是介乎中間的一羣，既不像蝴蝶翩翩，自得其樂，也不像其他同類般沈鬱自傷。可是，這種長有窄窄、茶褐色翅膀，翅膀周圍有如滾了一圈同色的流蘇般的小生靈，對生命却似乎是如斯的滿足。這九月中的清晨是這樣的令人舒泰——和煦、怡人，而且比夏天的日子更常清新的味道。窗外，耨子已開始在犁田了。犁過的地壓得平平的，上面騰騰的水氣在閃動着。這股活力從高原那邊一路滾動過來，至田上、而至窗內，竟使人的眼睛不甘就此停留在書本上。羣鴉也好像在慶祝牠們一年一度的節目似的，不停地在樹頂上飛舞，驟肩去就如一張綴滿千萬個黑結的大網，撒在空中，

The same energy which inspired the rooks, the ploughmen, the horses, and even, it seemed, the lean bare-backed downs, sent the moth fluttering from side to side of his square of the window-pane. One could not help watching him. One was, indeed, conscious of a queer feeling of pity for him. The possibilities of pleasure seemed that morning so enormous and so various that to have only a moth's part in life, and a day moth's at that, appeared a hard fate, and his zest in enjoying his meagre opportunities to the full, pathetic. He flew vigorously to one corner of his compartment, and, after waiting there a second, flew across to the other. What remained for him but to fly to a third corner and then to a fourth? That was all he could do, in spite of the size of the downs, the width of the sky, the far-off smoke of houses, and the romantic voice, now and then, of a steamer out at sea. What he could do he did. Watching him, it seemed as if a fibre, very thin but pure, of the enormous energy of the world had been thrust into his frail and diminutive body. As often as he crossed the pane, I could fancy that a thread of vital light became visible. He was little or nothing but life.

一次張得更大，伴隨着的是極之聒耳的嘶鳴。對牠們來說，彷彿把自己拋向空中，繼而徐徐的降落在樹上，是無比刺激的玩意。

這股推動着鴉羣、馬兒、犁田者、甚至那光禿高原的活力，飛蛾也好像感染到了似的，不斷在窗上的小方格的兩邊飛來飛去，惹人注意，而且起了一種異樣的憐憫之心。那早上能給予人的歡愉，可以是那麼的深，那麼的多。可是，牠在生命裡却只不過扮演一隻蛾的角色，而且还只是一隻在白天出現的蛾；這樣的命運真太慘了，而牠尽情享受着那僅有的微不足道的生活的機會，也實在叫人可憐。牠狡秘的飛向自己領域的一角，停留了一秒鐘，又再飛向另一角。除了飛到第三、第四隻角之外，牠還可以做些什麼呢？這就是牠的一切，儘管外面是遼闊的高原、無邊的天空、遠方雷聲的村煙、和那海上船舶傳來陣陣的浪漫的呼喚聲。牠可以做的，牠已經做了。看着牠，就好像看到一束由世界窮處的活力分出來的力量，把牠细小瘦弱的身軀填滿了。力量雖然纖弱，卻

Yet, because he was so small, and so simple a form of the energy that was rolling in at the open window and driving its way through so many narrow and intricate corridors in my own brain and in those of other human beings, there was something marvelous as well as pathetic about him. It was as if someone had taken a tiny bead of pure life and decking it as lightly as possible with down and feathers, had set it dancing and zig-zagging to show us the true nature of life. Thus displayed one could not get over the strangeness of it. One is apt to forget all about life, seeing it humped and bossed and garnished and cumbered so that it has to move with the greatest circumspection and dignity. Again, the thought of all that life might have been had he been born in any other shape caused one to view his simple activities with a kind of pity.

After a time, tired by his dancing apparently, he settled on the window ledge in the sun, and, the queer spectacle being at an end, I forgot about him. Then, looking up, my eye was caught by him. He was trying to resume his dancing,

是纯粹的。在小方格内循環往返的飛蛾，竟使我想像到一縷一縷的生命之光在閃耀。牠什麼都不是，牠就是生命本身。

可是，牠是那麼的細小，而如股已闖進我（以及其他人的）腦海中錯縱複雜的理路內的活力，又是那麼的單純。正因如此，這小飛蛾更叫人覺得奇妙、可憐。就如像有人把生命的一顆小珠子，以柔軟的絨毛纖巧地裝飾起來，然後讓它在我們眼前反覆上下飛舞，讓我的看到生命的真意。人面對着這種生命的展示，便只能感到奇異不已。肩着它負了微，隆起、經過裝飾而變得笨拙的軀殼，帶着尊嚴，減增減悲的飛舞着，真叫人忘了生命到底是什麼一回事。蛾要是以另一種形體出現，牠的將會是怎麼樣的生靈？想到這裏，不禁對牠那簡單的活動又起了一種憐恤之意。

過了一會，蛾在大陽照着的窗台上靜止下來，顯然是飛得太累了。隨着這奇異的一幕的結束，我也把牠忘記了。然後，我抬頭一看，目光又再被牠吸引著。牠正試圖繼續飛動，但

but seemed either so stiff or so awkward that he could only flutter to the bottom of the window-pane; and when he tried to fly across it he failed. Being intent on other matters I watched these futile attempts for a time without thinking, unconsciously waiting for him to resume his flight, as one waits for a machine, that has stopped momentarily, to start again without considering the reason of its failure. After perhaps a seventh attempt he slipped from the wooden ledge and fell, fluttering his wings, on to his back on the window sill. The helplessness of his attitude roused me. It flashed upon me that he was in difficulties; he could no longer raise himself; his legs struggled vainly. But, as I stretched out a pencil, meaning to help him to right himself, it came over me that the failure and awkwardness were the approach of death. I laid the pencil down again.

The legs agitated themselves once more. I looked as if for the enemy against which he struggled. I looked out of doors. What had happened there? Presumably it was mid-day, and work in the fields had stopped. Stillness and quiet had replaced the previous animation. The birds had taken themselves off to feed in the brooks. The horses stood still. Yet the power was there all the same, massed outside indifferent, impersonal, not attending to anything in particular.

牠的動作却是如此的僵硬、困難。牠只能飛到窗子的下面；牠嘗試飛往另一边，卻失敗了。我的心正惦掛着某些事情，便這樣漫不經意的看着牠那徒然的掙扎，等着牠重新飛起來，就像等候一部暫時停下来的機器再度活動，也不去思索停止的原因。經過也許是第七次的嘗試，牠終於由窗上滑下，仰躺在木台上，兩對翅膀顫動不已。牠那无助的姿態警醒了，我。我突然悟到牠的困境，牠再不能爬起來了，只有腿還在徒然掙扎。我把鉛筆伸過去，希望能幫助牠把身子反轉過來，就在那一剎，我突然體會到牠的失敗，牠的困難，正表示了死亡的來臨——於是，我把筆放下。

牠的腿又再抖動起來。我四處張望，盼望能找出牠正在對抗的敵人。我望向門外，什麼事發生了？時間大概已近中午，田中作業已停下來。剛才的沈澀景象也不復見，代替的是一片寂靜。鴉羣都吸飲下來，飛到小溪邊食，馬兒呆立的站著。可是，那力量仍是在外面洋溢着的，只是已變得漠不關心，不再澤及他人。

Somehow it was opposed to the little hay-coloured moth. It was useless to try to do anything. One could only watch the extraordinary efforts made by those tiny legs against an oncoming doom which could, had it chosen, have submerged an entire city, not merely a city, but masses of human beings; nothing, I knew, had any chance against death. Nevertheless after a pause of exhaustion the legs fluttered again. It was superb this last protest, and so frantic that he succeeded at last in righting himself. One's sympathies, of course, were all on the side of life. Also, when there was nobody to care or to know, this gigantic effort on the part of an insignificant little moth, against a power of such magnitude, to retain what no one else valued or desired to keep, moved one strangely. Again, somehow, one saw life, a pure bead. I lifted the pencil again, useless though I knew it to be. But even as I did so, the unmistakable tokens of death showed themselves. The body relaxed, and instantly grew stiff. The struggle was over. The insignificant little creature now knew death. As I looked at the dead moth, this minute wayside triumph of so great a force over so mean an antagonist filled me with wonder.

种，看来都对那草褐色的飞蛾不利。再纠缠下去也只是枉然。你只能看见它那细弱的腿，以极不平凡的挣扎去对抗即将来临的大限。那摧残的力量，如果它要选择的话，不单可以倾覆，甚至可以消灭整个人类。要知道，在上等一事物能有机会战胜死亡。然而，过了筋疲力尽的一阵，蛾的腿竟又再舞动了。这最后一战好极了，它用尽了力量，终于成功地把身子反转过来。我的同情和怜悯全都放在那渴求生命的一边了。在这无人关心，无人知晓之际，一隻毫不重要的小飞蛾，竟以这般勇猛无比的精精神，去抵挡那股毁灭的巨力，以图留住那没人珍惜或想要保存的，能不叫人深，的感动吗？我再次看到的那单纯的生命小珠子。我把铅笔再提起，尽管我知道是枉然的。即使这又如何，死亡已是不可挽回的现身了。蛾的身体稍鬆弛了一下，旋即僵硬起来。挣扎已完了，那微不足道的小生命已嚐到死亡之滋味。我看着死了的蛾，想着这样一股不可抗拒的力量，竟要与一个如此卑微的对手抗衡，遂因而不费吹

Just as life had been strange a few minutes before, so death was now as strange. The moth having righted himself now lay most decently and uncomplainingly composed. O yes, he seemed to say, death is stronger than I am.

灰之力得，勝利，心中不禁凜然。死之現在是
那樣的不可思議，正如生命在片刻前一樣的不
可思議。蛾現在端正的躺著，有一種說不出的
接納的泰然。是啊，牠好像說，死之比我更強
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