

The Star in Arizona: Interview with Yuri Yasuda

Translated by Ei Arakawa

Who named your name, Yuri? (Ei)

I think it was by my parents because of the town I was born. It was a small town called Eureka in CA. My mom wanted to name me Yurika, but my father didn't like it because it sounds like a typical name for a nightclub hostess in Japan. (Yuri)

I guess he met the lady with same name. (laughter) Have you been to Eureka?

I've been to four or five years ago. I found the house where we lived was still there.

Your parents are working in the U.S.A. when you were born?

My father was. He was there for about 5 years. I was born, my brother was born, then went back to Japan. I was like 3 years old.

(Cut)

Didn't you know you have U.S. citizenship?

I didn't know. I just know recently. My parents was here for business. They liked America, but they are not going to live forever. My father didn't like the idea of having U.S. citizenship just because you could. Because I was born here, then I should be American. He couldn't think that way. There was Vietnam War too. He thought about a military conscription. He was worry about my Japanese citizenship, so he submitted his choice for Japanese citizenship as soon as possible.

Then, you realized that you still have U.S. citizenship with Japanese citizenship.

It was 3 years ago. I was preparing a visa to work as an editor in Oregon. At the very last point, the consulate returned my application. They said I should make a passport because I have U.S. citizenship, and it is no problem that I selected Japanese citizenship long time ago. I thought that was funny, and I was scared. Is it really legal?

You know how hard to get back Japanese citizenship once you lose it. They must be very strict.

(Cut)

So, you hate to use an umbrella.

I don't like using it because I want my hands open.

How much you don't like? It was raining today.

If it is like little beyond mist, I chose not to use. I've been like this from an elementary school. If you got hard rain at the station, I was like that's ok, going home soaked. They have many rainy days in Oregon. As we mentioned, American people don't use umbrellas. I thought they don't use it because there are just too many rainy days, and they use cars anyway.

How was your home town?

Kobe? It was not particularly rainy.

I wonder where Yuri without an umbrella comes from. It's punk, isn't it?

(Cut)

Do you keep a journal?

I used to. When I was little. From a kindergarten, elementary school, then junior high. I was doing in the 6th grade, then I stopped because I became hate it.

Why? Why?

Maybe it's not hate. I just didn't feel like to write down. I didn't want to read it later.

So, you wanted to forget.

No, it's not that I wanted to forget.

Do you remember what you wrote?

It's just you know what happened today or what there is today. Nothing special.

I wonder why you became so conscious then.

I guess it was early adolescence.

(Cut)

When you finally see real Kankuro Nakamura of Kabuki, didn't you think that he was another person?

What? (laughter)

Because it was your dream come true.

I was suspicious until I got there.

Did you see something "behind scene" about Kabuki star?

Well, he was really a nice friendly person. What he likes, what he did. Nothing formal.

What are you going to do with that interview? Are you going to show it when he comes to Lincoln in this Summer? Like you have a very privileged special interview of the star!

Yeah, I guess I have to because I went to Arizona just for that . . .

(Cut)

You quit a journal.

I think it's because my mother's influence. My mother kept a journal for long time. She asked us to discard it without reading when she died. She was like that's the only will for her. She hates the diary being read after her death. You know she is not writing an essay. It's just like, for instance, "dad business trip." That's it. That is private for her.

Do you know where it is?

I never know. Then I actually had same opinion about what I write. How can I say, I just don't want to leave. I don't want to leave any sign of my writing.

You don't?

I don't know. It's a contradiction for me working as an editor. But, I don't know whom I'm making a journal. Then, I'm embarrassed to write for myself. Oh my god, am I writing for myself?!

As if you are looking at a mirror.

Exactly. I don't want to give a form to it.