

STRAN GERS

**(IN THE SANDS OF
RAINBOW SKIES)**

PENG-EAN KHOO



What is it you are holding in your hand?

STRANGERS

(IN THE SANDS OF RAINBOW
SKIES)

by Peng-Ean Khoo



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A GIFT FOR ALL.

Printed in Singapore

*for my parents, Albert & Nancy,
my husband, Tat Jen,
and our darling children, Beth & Keith*

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Prologue

700 years ago, I was an abandoned child on the streets of a place I cannot remember and I imagine it now with my fine imagination that a lovely, kind gentleman in green had picked me up. He smiled at my ruffian face full of spunk and dirt, and got me all cleaned up. Every 700 years, he looks for me and finds me, and then sends me a blanket. Some years I just eat grass and shampoo because I am also the delightful child who talks nonsense while the world goes around in circles. Sometimes they call me the star but actually I am that invisible sun which dawns just for one day every 700 years and then bing! I become a girl again. I am not sure what tall tales I spin every 700 years but my friend the perfect gentleman is always beside me.

We have a good chuckle and have a lot of good fun every epoch of new beginnings and every time, he marvels at the new tales, and he chuckles some more and that gets him chuckling more and more, and then we have some good fun figuring out exactly how cheeky this little girl is every 700 years.

His job is to make sure she doesn't get herself into too much trouble.

1. It is a very, very, very dark night.

A stranger stumbles upon a path; it isn't lit. It isn't on the map.

The stranger keeps tripping on wild stones. The winds howling, they keep blowing everything apart.

Everything that is the stranger's robe.

There is no danger of anything, save the path disintegrating.

The path is disintegrating. There are no more markers. There are no more roads, no more paths. They are no longer relevant.

The stranger approaches a house. It is irrelevant to her.

A man standing on the porch watches her stumble. She doesn't want to come in. She just wants to feel the storm. Figure how to be one with it.

At first, he was worried. He has never seen one as stubborn as she is. Reckless, even.

He thought to himself, "Where is this child from?"

I come from the stars of the night. I am the night itself that brings the light of dawn through the midnight sun.

A voice from within is spoken to both of them.

The sun is not day. The sun is the midnight sun. It is the dawn in the day that is even darker than the darkest night.

It is the midnight sun. It is the inverse of day. When the light is so bright you cannot see anymore, then you will need the midnight sun.

The man at the porch understands now why the stranger doesn't go on the porch.

But the stranger doesn't. There is no more path. And they are to meet, as they each are.

She lives in the unknown of the darkest night and day.

There is no shelter for such strangers.

2. There is no respite in the house. Not a real one anyway.

The winds are still howling, the storm is still raging. No amount of soothing can sooth a stranger in search of the darkest day.

That day is here, and it is light. It is the daylight that got warped. The midnight sun gives the perspective that perhaps everything happy clappy isn't real.

The man on the porch descends down the steps. His robe fluttering in the winds.

He is now standing on the ground of the dark night.

It is all out in the open. There is no map, no certainty, no compass, save that which is in the heart.

No easy offerings of this and that.

No convenient stories, roles, truths that don't mean anything unless it is living and livable. There is no running away from the reality of the elements.

He can't help himself.

He runs into the fields of mystery.

He never got back on the porch.

The house dissolves.

3. You will not threaten.

Love does not work like that. I will not cry because I have become unafraid. I have break, broken and unbroken so many times, I know what being broken is, and that is not what I am now.

I am courage.

The stranger explains to the man who is now in mystery.

Mystery has no form.

I will not bow down to the tales of men and women.

Only mystery.

4. Mystery is a freedom of the new. The not seeable, that is why there is no path.

It is to be made with every step, walk with every newness of faith that has no past, because it has to be new.

Faith has no path. Faith means walking in the unknown. Faith is not a house. It is not a refuge. It comforts, but once one is ready, it is to go out in the open, and live again.

Nobody has a right over anyone's destiny. How one thinks, how one acts, how one lives, it is up to that individual.

We all take our chances in the open.

The stranger explains to the man who was once on the porch.

Now we are both finally able to walk in the open skies together.

The stars and moon are there during the night, and the sun during the day.

Sometimes the wind howls, sometimes it is a cool breeze.

We front it together because if you are living on the porch, we are not making any new.

Your house has dissolved, in any case, as has mine, a long time ago.

Take my hand, and be my friend, in the open season?

Where are we going, he asks her.

Dunno, she shrugs.

It's been 700 years, who knows?

5. The meaning is very deep.

The meaning. It isn't this or that. It cannot ultimately be perceived by our human mind, and we just have to be content with that. If we keep pursuing it, we would ruin ourselves, and if we think there is an order to it, there is a structure that might hold for a bit, but it isn't the ultimate inner experience.

You have asked me to the highest honesty of me, and I would have to share that there is no such convenience of hierarchy.

I cannot even use this word because so much has been wired around it, and so many people have fought about it. That is why I would rather that we, maybe, stay silent about it.

There are too many perceptions of the ultimate. In the end, there doesn't seem to be an ultimate except a truth that we feel inside about ourselves, and anyone that we have the good blessing to encounter.

There is no storm that we cannot get through. There is a lot that we cannot meet inside of us, if so many things become so hard to be.

So, it is best we don't try to set too many rules. That's what I think anyway, but what I think isn't what many people think.

I think every day the sun rises and the sun sets, the wind blows and the clouds drift by. The wildflowers grow in the open fields but few take the time and solitude to get to know them deeply. I think animals are cool, and trees are beautiful. I think humans are also very fascinating but sometimes they get bossy, especially about their ways of the world. I think life is cool if you don't try so hard to try and fit in and please so many people. I think life can be very simple but too many people will persuade you to be fancy, and then you learn to do fancy.

I think there is a sweet, divine courage in not needing to say a pretty prayer to be good and decent. I think that's the real sweet mercy that few dare to sip and call it wine. But I think that's the truth - my truth anyway.

It's beyond a word. It feels disrespectful but it isn't. It is a place that no longer needs to label this as that as this. It is a daily living of the simple day: the sun rises, we go about our lives faithfully to our choices, we live the consequences, we go to bed, rest up well, we rise again, and we find sweet delight in the simple company of everything about life.

Maybe this is what the highest enlightenment looks like: an ordinary day.

There is no king, no queen, no sparks of sizzles, no power of anything. It is the perfect calmness and stillness of an awe that is so simple, and unassuming, it is understatingly simply beautiful.

Beauty is this profundity that doesn't need anything more, other than us simply being happy with as is. It is so simple it is so hard because our human desires long for and chase after so many butterflies only to realise that our sweetest nectars reside in our own truthful hearts of innocent love.

Love is always innocent. It reaches out in fondness and affection. It is people not believing in it and manipulating it that makes it all become distorted.

Love is innocent. We are born to love each other. But love has many a crossing before you really know that it is simple. Love is simple.

Courage is simply daring to love the other across all the barriers to love.

The stranger suddenly looks up to the night sky, and says, "The night is the same as the day. Being on the porch is the same as walking in the open. Being daring is the same as being nice and kind. Being funny gets you to jiggle your tummy."

The man on the porch replies, "Now I get you. You are ok."

Yes, I am ok. I just want to be walking under the open skies. And thank you for walking with me.

"How long have we walked like this?" he asks her.

The stranger replies, “A very long time.”

“Like forever?” he ventures.

She casts a smile at him, in a sideways glance, and says reassuringly,

“Maybe a little wee bit longer than that.”

6. So, Time looks at the stranger.

I know what you are going to ask me.

I can't tell you because I don't have an answer. I don't know is my best answer. I don't need a narrative. I don't need a human perception of existence. I am not in it.

Time looks at the stranger. Is this the end of me?

There is no end, no beginning. Only you perceive it as such.

How do you exist like that?

I don't know.

I only exist as I know it. I see what I know and then I take the next step.

Is the path real?

Yes, absolutely.

But you don't need to name it?

Yes, of course I do, to make it real.

But why don't you name yourself?

Because I am a mirror to Time, and maybe Time alone can co-locate me.

If you deny my existence, I don't exist. If you imprison me as your shadow, then I am the shadow of your sun. If you release me from your bondage, then I am the fury of freedom, for a while, until I become night, and then I am calm, like the night holding the stars, the moon; a counterpoint to the sun, in the day.

Are you Earth?

Earth is Earth.

“If I am the sun of me,” Time is now pondering the puzzle, “then you are the sun of you.”

We are getting closer.

“You are space,” Time gasps.

And that is why we gotta walk hand-in-hand.

“Am I off the porch now,” asks the man on the porch.

“Well, I did walk a long way to come and find you,” replies the stranger.

700 years.

Longer, farther, wider.

Where next?

“I have an idea,” she looks up from examining the matter on the ground.

Are we flying?

No, no, we gotta walk. Keep plodding.

I have a name for the sun of me:

Innocence.

“You are certainly not, and don’t fake it,” reprimands the man who was once on the porch.

“I can imagine myself to be,” the stranger in the dark night of the storm looks up, with a cheeky smile.

I think we can figure. I have another name for the sun of me: the midnight sun in the dark night of all storms.

Are you never afraid?

I am afraid until I meet you. And then, I am not afraid anymore.

What is it that you do all day?

I am the child; I play.

And I am eternity; I stay.

Do you get it now why we are walking hand-in-hand in the storm of all ages?

The man who was once on the porch is now beaming, grinning from ear-to-ear, and begins to walk on the grounds of Earth in full freedom, with his new stranger-friend.

Sometimes she runs off wildly chasing a butterfly, and sometimes she holds his hand really tightly. And sometimes they both smile at the raging storms of the night, that they both know shall too pass.

Their “suns of me” glowing inside each of them reflecting the “stars of me” reminding them why there is also always “the dark nights of me”.

7. When you are touched within like that,

when the stars of me, the sun of me, the night of me, the moon of me glows with a rainbow around it, is when you know there is a friend out there, looking out for you, through thick and thin.

I stood on the porch waiting for you, until you found me.

I know, she replies.

I walked the ends of space and time to find you.

How many times have we done this?

Many times.

Have I always been the kid?

Sometimes you are the adult.

How does it feel like being real?

It feels like this.

Two friends walking on the sands of time.

Do we make footprints?

8. “Only if you are walking!

If you glide or float,
Then, no trace left!!!”, Time, presumably an old man,
wisely counsels.

And so, they walked like that on Earth. With footprints,
and then the wind comes and blows the sands of space-
time, all not to bits, but to eternal-infinity.

Is there nothing left?

There is.

What is?

Can't you get it?

If there are no footprints, how do we remember? How do
we chart our destinies?

Where is the path?

We have us.

But nobody remembers anyone.

Maybe they do.

I did walk the distance to find you.

I did wait out all of eternity for you to find me.

Two rainbows in a circle, encircling the moon; the
invisible sun in the dark night of stars.

If you don't exist, I would have no one to talk to.

If I don't exist, you would have no one to talk to.

When we are each looking up at the storm clouds in the
sky. Both day and night.

How are we talking in each of our silences?

**9. The heart, my heart is understanding what you
are trying to teach me.**

I cannot type it out. I cannot say it out loud. It is to be
discovered. It is to be felt.

The words will be misunderstood.

How many times have we met?

We met a long time ago before time.

And now, what of now?

We enjoy our meeting again.

I feel like crying.

That would be the rain.

The true waters of friendship.

The girl on the sand weeps.

The sun of me becomes a rainbow.

The tears glistening on her eyes reflect the colours of the
entirety of eternity, and beyond.

She wipes her eyes dry.

How many times have we done this?

Many times.

It hurts every time. And it liberates every time.

The rainbow child looks up. It is a good day today.

10. You are the Rainbow Warrior.

“What?” the child looks right into the eyes and heart of the man who knows time and knows what she hears to be true.

Slowly Softly it will Unfold.

It is no wonder I keep seeing the moon-bows that nobody sees. They are complete circles around the invisible sun.

You speak like from a time out of time.

Yeah. Mostly, I think I am in that space.

You are not letting on what you know.

I know. Space-time is just space-time. The fabric of existence is made of friendship.

Like you and me now, we are friends.

It is as simple as that?

Yup.

We travel all kinds of journeys to find each other, and then when we have found each other, we are happy.

Just like that?

Just like that.

Is there anything more to it?

Yup.

And...

It's space-time smiling and glowing and all the stars and moons and suns of all time just floating in space, apparently going somewhere.

Where do they go?

To look for one another.

Are you my friend?

Yes.

Why are you still holding my hand?

Because I am happy.

Just like that?

Just like that.

I am happy just looking at you looking at me.

There must be more.

Nope. This is how the story of all times in all spaces end.
They end well.

Happily ever after.

That's so clichéd.

Yes.

We are destined to find one another.

Over and over again?

Yes.

When my heart glows, that's the sun of you. When your tears flow down your face, that's the rain of me departing and returning again to you. Tears of sorrow and tears of joy. When the sun meets the rains of sorrow and joy, that's the rainbow of us. There is always two of us to complete the rainbow circle.

Why are you speaking in riddles?

I speak like this because this is real for me. It makes me happy to think of us like this.

You speak like a child, not a warrior.

I am not a warrior. I don't fight. I journey and I discover.

Love, innocence and friendship, in space-time.

I fight perhaps for us, our solitudes of innermost joys.

What is that?

It is when I meet me. When I complete as my own
rainbow circle.

And me, who am I?

You are my friend.

You are my night and day.

You are my everything.

Because of you, I am whole.

11. You are always an old soul.

Hey, watch your mouth.

I am merely stating a fact. You are Space-Time.

And I am not even either. I feel like I am from beyond existence.

You are dreaming.

No, I am awake.

I have always been awake.

I wake up things.

You have too much imagination.

Rainbows are dreams. They are wishes.

Do you always wish everything into reality?

Yes. The good things. Things that make people happy.

How do you do it?

I imagine happiness. I imagine it, and then it comes true.

It is always a good ending?

Yes.

I imagine goodness. Goodness makes me happy.

I imagine the good in everyone.

Why are you a warrior?

I don't know. Because you said so. And it feels right.

It is something that I can be out of.

The rainbow dreams. I can see them being woven.

I don't weave anything. I just dance joy. I like to dance joy.

Joy fills up the void of the empty nothing.

It is like a wildflower sprouting in space-time. Pop, something good happens out of goodness. It is not nothing. It is everything.

Everything good?

Yes.

Is it always good?

Yes.

Goodness prevails.

What is that? That goodness which you keep speaking of?

It's love. When you love someone, it is goodness.

When you love someone a lot a lot, it is like a triple chocolate ice-cream with supernova peanut butter topping.

Why do you always keep talking about food?

It is our basic drive. The body needs food.

What kind of food makes you happy?

Happee food. Food, when you eat it, you feel like yourself again. Like a simple human happiness that doesn't need anything fancy.

Are relationships the same?

Yes, they are sometimes vanilla grey and sometimes they are blue, and sometimes they are white like clouds and sometimes they are colourful delightful swirlies.

Relationships are food too?

Yes, they nourish.

They nourish the me.

So that the me is happy again. Like the simple happy me that doesn't need anything fancy except for that friend of me.

Are you a child?

I thought you said I was the warrior.

You speak like a child.

I told you I am the child.

But since you said "You are the Rainbow Warrior", I put on some rainbow swirlies to add some colour to the very grey and rainy day today.

I like rainbow swirls.

I know.

12. Work isn't like that at all.

There are many people we work with, and everyone is a potential friend.

When we work at something that makes sense, that spreads goodness, it is wholesome, and we are essentially weaving a rainbow dream in reality.

So, there is no tension. Everyone, ultimately, becomes family. It is a matter of whether we recognise it or not.

Time on earth is very precious. Every step has traction. It may seem like it is passing by like clouds but actually, it is making existence, in that space-time. So, it is very real.

Reality becomes bit by bit and then your whole life becomes a story of you.

Time, the old man, starts to chuckle.

Why are you chuckling, and I am mindful not to label your age.

You have youth on your side.

Not for long.

Maybe in my mind, but my body will soon become old. And that's also an interesting experience. Fascinating, actually. But I know it will get creaky. I hope I get to

grow old in human life. That's my deep wish, a prayer by any name is a sincere wish.

What is your business today?

My brain has a brain hang. It doesn't want to make anything except write this story. It is not wanting to go back to work.

It is because this work is important. Writing this story.

Why?

It is because it is a genuine story of you.

And you need to write it to read it back to yourself.

I see.

And you are still here, listening, witnessing, so that I know the story of me makes sense?

You already know it makes sense.

You are simply coming into your own.

The child who finally has a voice. Does that make me a rainbow warrior in reality?

I am simple in my deepest me. I meet darkness like a mystery. Sometimes, I get scared and I hold your hand,

but other than that, I am cool with darkness, because I know I can see the stars and wonder at the night sky.

And I can stare endlessly at the swirling skies, seas and wildflowers. And you.

You are a mystery.

And I enjoy playing with you.

13. I have travelled on foot from Persia to India and then I sat on a tree under an auspicious sky and waited for a long time.

I was a Princess but they could not make me do anything that I didn't want to.

I decided to just walk and cross the borders of deserts and storms and rivers and floods because I need to be in India.

And then, one day, a little boy turns up, and you know the rest of the story.

And then one further day, a little girl turns up, and she is not little anymore, but a mid-age woman who seeks. Seeks not, actually. She is just playing.

She is not waiting for anyone in particular in the sands of time, but perhaps for old man time.

I shall travel when I travel. I shall visit when I visit. I shall wave a wand of joy on the star on your head, because you are joy, and you don't even know it.

You have forgotten how to be happy.

Every 100 years, I visit the Earth.

This is also a story.

Everyone is whoever he or she wants to become in life.

In life, it is important that you clean yourself up, when you have lost your way. Don't sit under the tree like I did, for so many years, just because the world is swirling in the storms of change.

Go make sure you do some good with your life.

The man who was once on the porch chuckles some more.

This is a cheeky one.

She is sassy like the dance of night meeting the day, which is dawn breaking onto itself. It is orange.

It is the day of orange skies, and please don't forget to eat your ice-cream, and please don't forget to bring your chocolates, and what nots.

14. Now that you can remember, what are you going to do?

It changes nothing.

I go about walking.

Are you coming along? I guess you have been watching out for me from the porch.

Yes.

Does it matter how many times we have done this?

[Silence from both persons.]

Will you tell me your name?

She shrugs. I can't remember.

You know your name, right?

Yes.

It means beauty.

She pauses, and reveals a bit more.

A wildflower on a summerfield of July.

That's a pretty name.

I know.

I actually do like it pretty.

Are you a princess?

No.

You are not a girl, are you?

I am a woman. But I have the heart of a child. We all do.
That's where joy comes from.

Are you going to teach me how to fight?

No.

Fighting is for fools.

What are you going to teach me to do?

You are time - you already know everything.

I don't know how you do it.

I already taught you.

Keep walking.

You are so sassy.

I know.

You are ageless.

That's you.

I am real.

And so am I.

They both grin while enjoying an ice cream cone each
that bing-ed mysteriously out of nowhere.

And it is chocolate and peanut butter, and vanilla, and it
tastes good on a muggy July afternoon.

You make everything real again.

Yes.

15. I offer you my friendship.

She suddenly turns to the man who is now walking beside her, and who had left the porch a while back.

Are you old?

He keeps silent.

Are you sad, sometimes?

He keeps sad.

Do you know that this story is like ageless?

He doesn't want to say anything.

Do you think mortality needs a context?

He has his already perfectly bounded.

What if I tell you that now is the only real present?
Would you still be caught up in eternity, in space-time
continuums? Would you still swirl around in your mind?
In your worldview?

I am here with you.

I am not a princess.

I did not travel from Persia to India. I did not even travel
to China.

You come from a place even farther than that.

I did travel a lot to (she whispers into his ears).

You are now making this the real you.

Yes, I don't want us to be in lalaland. I want us to be in reality.

I don't imagine anything.

I imagine you to be real.

Where is this place?

It is a place where we both can be real to each other, and not be afraid of being laughed at, or hurt, or be rejected, or abandoned.

What do you call such a sacred place of reality?

I would call it true love but people call it friendship. It is the two coming together and becoming truly for each other.

It feels so entrapping.

It doesn't. It secures you to the heart. You become fastened, and then you can soar.

Do you always make people feel like that?

I don't make anyone feel anything. They make themselves feel that something.

You make me feel happy when I am with you. I can't explain that. That feeling is the mystery. It doesn't need a why. It just is.

You complete me.

Like a missing piece of the puzzle of me.

Yes. Now you and I are speaking the same language.

Yes. The sun of me enjoying the reflections and the warmth, the deep and cool interplays of the alivenesses of the sun of you.

I understand you now. Reality is everything, and nothing, and yet, eternal. The whole spectrum of being human.

Yes.

I am the princess of me then.

Yes.

And this is the kingdom of fairy tales.

In reality.

Yes.

We make it real.

Like when the wildflowers pop out of nowhere?

Yes. Like when the wildflowers pop out of nowhere, and everywhere.

Every time? Every moment?

Always.

Why?

Because of curiosity. Because of friendship. Because of true love. Because of no-because.

Actually, it is: Because of you. You are precious in the whole of existence. There is only one you.

And I find you extremely interesting, and you have turned up in my life. You have turned up for me.

Did I capture your heart?

Yes. You moved something deep within me.

Are we still strangers?

I don't think we could be.

What changed for us? What changed us?

Our walking in the sands of space-time.

The choice to walk together.

I don't want to have to look for you for another 700 years.

The man before time who is time out of time, grins.

He hasn't grinned like this for 700 years.

Suddenly, he becomes truly — ageless. He becomes alive.

16. What is it you are holding in your hand?

I made it.

What did you make it out of?

I made it out of life. Do you like it? I made it for you.

What is it?

It's a flower. You can call it a rose but it is actually any flower - a wildflower. It is my gift for you.

Do you always make gifts like this?

Yes. I make them when I feel them.

Feel what?

That it is the right time and place to make them. Do you like my flower?

I cannot accept such an offering. What do you need in return?

Nothing. I only desire to see you smile.

How so?

To have your heart light up with rainbow skies. To have you be happy again.

To have that house inside you be fully ablaze with the sun of you.

The light of the lamp?

She nods.

Am I the lamp?

This time she is silent.

Am I the light?

This time she is silent some more.

What is inside this house in me?

I have already drawn it. It's your hermitage.

My solitude?

Your homecoming.

To be the sun of me?

No, just to be. Be you. Be silly, be happy. Be courageous, be kindly, be strong. Be joyful, be crazy, be witty. Be cool. Be naughty, be cheeky, be glorious. Be funny, be wild. Just be. Be one with the skies and everything. Be human. Be real.

Ah, Be real. I am not the man on the porch anymore, am I?

Nope, you are the child.

And you?

Also, the child.

What kingdom is this?

It is the kingdom of children playing and discovering,
with lots of fun and laughter.

And mystery.

Yes, lots of it.

And the flower?

It is the wild rose of today.

**17. So, she looks at him, straight in the eye, and says,
“Let’s go.”**

“Go where?” he asks.

Go where you said to go in the first place.

He chuckles. You are a tricky one.

I know.

No need to cry.

Yes, you were right. No need to cry.

And they both smile.

We have work to do.

Always.

And they both smile again.

Is this like this every July?

Like what?

Oh, of orange skies and blue birds, and rainbow forests.

You are starting to dream again.

No, I am fully awake, and happy.

Wildly happy, actually.

18. You become drunk in yourself.

She finally gets it.

What is, he asks.

You become drunk in your own narratives.

Love isn't a narrative, is it?

No, it is a feeling. It is a caring. If you need to analyse love, you are done for.

What is the name of this book?

I don't know. It writes itself.

We can't live out of our own heads, can we?

No, we cannot.

We live out of our own kindnesses.

It's a good place to be - kindnesses.

It feels simple, and happy. Enduringly happy.

And there is no more need for narratives.

Which means we have come to the edge of why.

Yes.

What is the edge of July?

It is simply the threshold into simple joy.

It is the edge of me, isn't it?

Yes. What are you feeling right now?

I feel love. I feel bliss. I feel simplicity.

You are home. Welcome home.

I have always been here.

It is so difficult, yet so easy.

Are you happy now?

Yes.

Strangely, simply, simply, simply so.

What do you call this?

beauty

19. I am in my room of hermitage, but I am not alone.

I am with you, for all times.

I look out of the window and I am not longing to be here or there. I see the sun, and I am reflected by it, in it.

I am in my writing studio, and I am happy making art, and stories, and that makes me happy.

When you feel sad, and things don't go your way, reach out, and there will always be a way through it.

When you feel happy, it is when things are as is.

When it gets tough, it is tough until you know you have overcome it.

Be gracious in your realness.

That's all there is to it. Be real, be you, be a decent human person.

Are you inviting me in to your studio?

As you said, the door was always open.

You are an enigmatic one.

Yes.

Let's write something, and then we go out to play.

Let's play first, then write something.

Let's do both together.

Why not? Write and play at the same tune.

C'est la vie, Bon Bons. Tralala.



PENG-EAN KHOO read Economics at Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge, U.K. and is a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales. She makes art, pretends occasionally to write music, aspires to produce theatre, is a sustainable enterprise developer and mentor, loves to write and insists on everything poetic and nonsensical (even when it isn't!). She thought she was a rebel without a cause but she isn't. She is simply deeply in love with life and the world, and loves to query that which departs from wholeness and wholesomeness.

Peng-Ean is a wife and mom, and she has long ago blurred the distinction between a stay-at-home and working mom. Recently, she also demystified even more myths for herself, and she is very content, peaceful and happy, thereafter. She believes no one is superhuman, and that is the biggest myth and fallacy of our culture, family, education, workplace and communities. She believes one can only be herself or himself, and that is all and everything stupendously beautiful! She loves exploring and doing things with her friends because ... she has given up trying to justify why one has to justify the right and delight to have a good time – especially with loved ones!

‘C’EST LA VIE, BON BONS. TRALALA’ – is a collection of art & poetry that emerged during the COVID-19 Pandemic. It is a body of work where the poet-artist is reflecting on how ‘small is beautiful’* looks like in daily life, what ‘Development as Freedom’** means personally for her in global society, and it documents her examination of the statement that ‘simplicity is beautiful and profound’. She discovers that this is the name, the way and the voice of the journey and homecoming of herself in a poet-artist’s studio.

**EF Schumacher, 1973*

***Amartya Sen, 1999*

‘STRANGERS (in the sands of rainbow skies)’

by Peng-Ean Khoo

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STRANGERS was really elusive for me. It kept wanting to be Strangers *something something* and then it wanted to be aduly-fancy like STRANGERS between the sheets of September, and then it wanted to be ALL-mystery like STRANGERS in the night skies walking, and then it wanted to be like fake-sorrowful like STRANGERS in the inconsolability of the ends of space-time. And then, it wanted to be childish and full of flights of fancy like STRANGERS in the Sands of Rainbow Skies. And then *It* wanted to be simple, like STRANGERS. That’s really the hand-to-heart truth and story of how STRANGERS came to be. When I was young, I wanted life to be endearing. Now that I am older, I long for life to be endearing again. I think that’s really that which endures.