

# Writing and Sharing a Love Letter EFL Activity

- Rex Tanimoto , edited by Curtis Kelly

## **Needed:**

- 30-60 minutes spread over two classes
- students over 16 who have a good relationship with each other and the teacher
- copies of the love letter (next page)
- (optional) stationary and envelopes for each of them

## **Instructions for class 1:**

- 1) Have them read the about love letter contest and the love letter on the worksheet. Discuss it.
- 2) Tell them to write a love letter to someone they appreciate (usually done as homework). Tell them it can be to anyone: a friend, a romantic partner, a relative, or even someone they met in passing, but it should be to just one person.
- 3) Tell them to put the letter in an envelope and write "To: (name) From: (name) on the outside. They can also decide whether they want to let anyone besides you to see it or not, by writing "Keep Secret" on the back too. Assure them that you will follow their request.

## **Instructions for class 2:**

- 1) Have them work with partners of their own choice. They should tell their partners who they wrote to and why, but it is up to them whether they want to let their partner read the letter or not.
- 2) During this time, collect a few temporarily and read them yourself.
- 3) After awhile, get everyone's attention and interview a couple of learners who did not write "Keep Secret" on their envelopes. Ask if you can share their letters with the class. Read them to the class yourself if they need correction or let the authors read them if their English is good enough to be communicative.
- 4) Ask for more volunteers to share. In my experience, although most students write "Keep Secret," they are still willing to share after one or two other students share theirs.
- 5) Savor the rising feeling of warmth and trust.

## Love Pours Forth From Letters to Kimimachi-zaka

By Koji Nakada, The Daily Yomiuri 2/28/95

Deep in the snow country of Akita Prefecture, there is a prefectural park called Kimimachi-zaka. It is a famous attraction located in long and narrow Futatsuimachi, which is sandwiched between Akita cedar trees that are more than 200 years old to the south and the hills of the Shiragami district noted for their beech forest in the north.

The forest is registered on UNESCO's World Heritage List.

It is an area known for its beautiful women. Furthermore, it is where the tasty variety of rice called Akita komachi is grown.

The mayor of the town invited people from all over the country to take part in a "love letter" contest he held last year as part of efforts to promote his town. Contestants were asked to compete in writing "the most affectionate love letter in Japan," the kind of irreplaceable and heartfelt letter one sends to a loved one. The town received 7,035 letters.

They were screened and the top prize went to an 80-year-old woman. Her letter was not like one written by a young person, full of sweet and flaming thoughts. Rather, hers was far better because of its warmth.

Calling her letter, "To You in Heaven," Take Yanagihara of Akita Prefecture addressed it to her husband who died in battle in China in 1939. In those days she could not write freely in letters to her husband because of military censorship. In her winning letter, she bared her heart and wrote the letter at one stroke. She said she felt as if she had become young again and was refreshed after finishing it.

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### To You in Heaven

By Take Yanagihara

**I**t has been more than half a century since I saw you off with our daughter on my back and waving a small paper Rising Sun flag. You held me in your strong arms for only a fleeting moment.

I would like to board a spaceship and be at your side. You are still young at 32 but I am approaching 80. When we meet, do not ask 'Who are you?' Say instead, 'I've missed you.' Let me cuddle up to you like I did in those days long ago.

Since we said farewell, I have thought of you and lived relying on your love. I wish I could sleep again in your arms. Please hold me tight and never let me go.

(in Japanese)

天国のあなたへ

娘を背に日の丸の小旗をふって、あなたを見送って  
から、もう半世紀が過ぎてしまいました。たくましい  
あなたの腕に抱かれたのは、ほんのつかの間でした。

三二歳で英霊となって天国に行ってしまったあなた  
は、今どうしていますか。

私も宇宙船にのってあなたのおそばに行きたい。あ  
なたは三二歳の青年、私は傘寿を迎える年です。おそ  
ばに行った時、おまえはどこの人なんだなんて言わな  
いでね。よく来たと言って、あの頃のように寄り添っ  
て座らせて下さいね。お逢いしたら娘夫婦のこと、孫  
のこと、また、すぎし日のあれこれを話し、思いっき  
り、甘えてみたい。あなたは優しく、そうかそうかと  
うなづきながら、慰め、よくがんばったねと、ほめて  
下さいね。

そして、そちらの「きみまち坂」につれて行っても  
らいたい。春のあでやかな桜花、夏、なまめかしい新  
緑、秋、ようえんなもみじ、冬、清らかな雪模様な  
ど、四季のうつろいの中を二人手をつないで歩いてみ  
たい。

私はお別れしてからずっと、あなたを思いつづけ、  
愛情を支えにして生きて参りました。もう一度あなた  
の腕に抱かれ、ねむりたいものです。力いっぱい抱き  
しめて絶対はなさないで下さいね。

秋田県・八〇・無職  
柳原 タケ