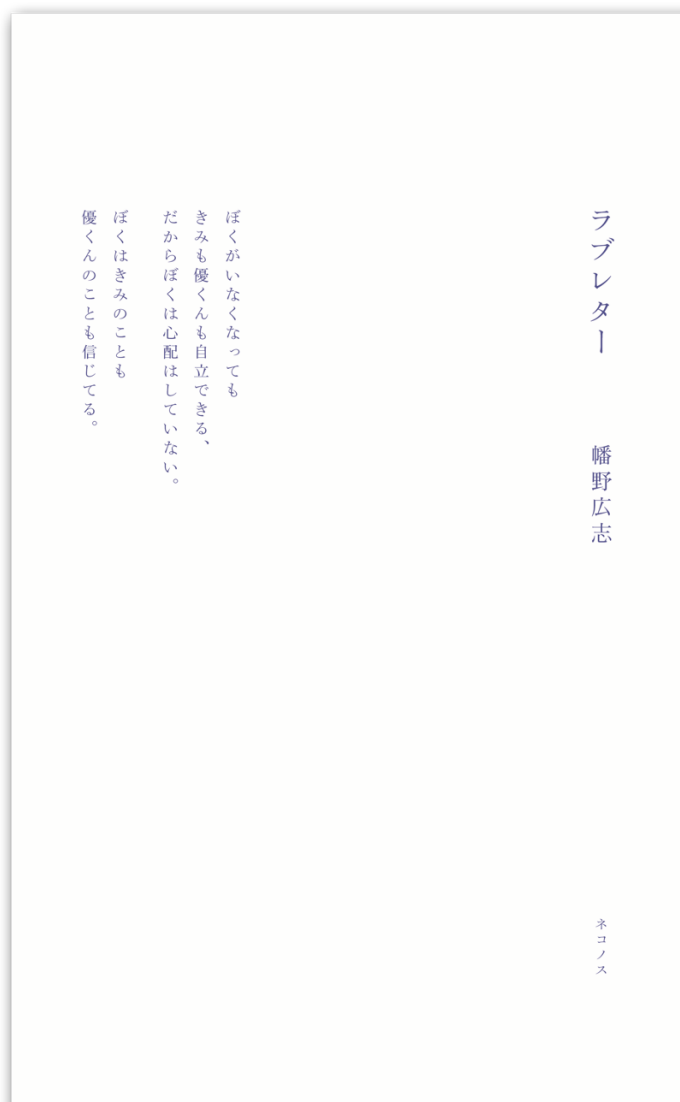


Love Letters: 48 Letters from a Photographer to His Wife and Son

(*Rabu-retā: Shashinka ga tsuma to musuko he okutta 48-tsu no tegami*)

Author: Hiroshi Hatano



Genre: Essays, Photography

Target audience: All ages, particularly with a focus on people raising children and those interested in the author's photography and writing

Total number of pages: 240 pages



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About the Author:

A photographer, former hunter, and blood cancer patient.

Born in Tokyo in 1983, Hatano left his studies at the Nippon Photography Institute in 2004. He started apprenticing under advertising photographer Tsutomu Takasaki in 2010, went independent, and married his wife in 2011.

Hatano obtained his hunting license in 2012. He and his wife had their son in 2016, and the following year, he was diagnosed with multiple myeloma.

Other books by the author include *Bokutachi ga Erabenakatta Koto o Erabi-Naosu Tame ni* (*To choose again the things we couldn't choose*), published by Poplar; *Shashin-Shū* (*Photo collection*), Hobonichi; *Boku ga Kodomo no Koro Hoshikatta Oya ni Naru* (*I'll become the parent I wanted as a child*), PHP; *Nande Boku ni Kikundaro* (*Why do they ask me?*), Gentosha; and *Tanin no Nayami wa Hitogoto, Jibun no Nayami wa Ogoto* (*Other people's problems aren't serious, but mine are grave*), Gentosha.

Synopsis:

I'm a photographer who lives with his wife and our young son. I have multiple myeloma, a blood cancer, and my doctor told me that I have around three years left to live. But I'm not pessimistic. I'm satisfied with my life, though my wife is going through a lot, nursing me and taking care of our young boy. This book is a collection of love letters I've written to her—and it's also my will.

People take photos and write letters because they want to convey something to others. That something might be feelings of gratitude, love, joy, or the surprise of discovering something amazing, or it could be feelings of uncertainty or loneliness.

I've been taking photos and writing letters to convey things to my wife and son. I'm not sure if I've succeeded, but I'm pretty happy with my life and enjoying it every day. So, okay, I'm going to start writing another letter now.

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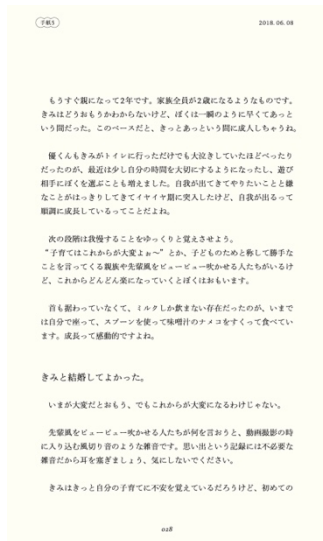
Overview

Let's Say Our Mealtime Prayers Together

I'm a thirty-four-year-old photographer. I live with my thirty-one-year-old wife and our ultra-cute son, who is a year and eight months old.

The other day, I was diagnosed with multiple myeloma, a type of blood cancer, and my doctor said that I probably had three years to live. I was crushed.

I mentioned it on my blog and received many responses. Among them, I was asked, "If there was a button that let you go back to the past, would you push it?"



I seriously considered it, but no, I wouldn't push the button because I've never been happier than I am now. I would want to marry Yukari again and bring Yu into this world. I'm not trying to act tough. I'm genuinely satisfied with my life. However, I have to say my wife has had it tough, looking after our boy and taking care of me, a sick husband. This book is a collection

of love letters I've written to my wife, and it's also my will.

I asked my wife the same question a little while ago: if she could go back in time, would she want to live the same life she's now living? She said yes, she would. Those were the words that saved me.

Our dinner is ready now. We're having beef stroganoff tonight. We'll put a bib around Yu's neck and say our mealtime prayers together.

My Second Year as a Cancer Patient

After suddenly developing pneumonia and septic fever, I was rushed to the hospital, spending Christmas and New Year's in a hospital bed.

I figure I'm the type of person who loves to learn things I don't know. This occasion taught me how tough it is to be down with pneumonia—very tough, though I did enjoy a few things during the experience.

A year has gone by since I was diagnosed with blood cancer. It's opened my eyes to a new world, and the year has been quite interesting, discovering what it's like when a person gets cancer. I hope that in my second year as a cancer patient, I'll be able to continue to learn new things and enjoy living my life.

Even if I happen to die, I'm pretty sure I'll still be enjoying myself, finding out what it's like after a person dies.

Yu looks happy now that I've been discharged. We're playing with the dry pasta he's brought from the kitchen, and then I hear your voice as you look everywhere for the

pasta. This is when I think to myself that I'm glad to be alive.

The Reason You and I Don't Change

We were walking through a shopping mall together when a friend from your high school days called out to you. I felt relieved to hear the two of you chat. Neither of you tried to act dominant.

You're the type of woman other women often push around. You don't push back, which may make you an easy target for some people. But the problem is that you're still hurt from the stress of being pushed around.

People who assert their dominance over others often do so concerning things that have nothing to do with them or the other person. It might be about their husband's line of work or their children's development. I think these are people who lack confidence in themselves.

I'm happy I married you because you're never like that. Because there are many people in this world whose moods change faster than the weather, a person needs to be stable and unchanged.

A person doesn't have to change if they're with someone who's a rock. I think being with you has enabled me to remain unchanged. And maybe it works both ways: you don't change because I don't.

My Very Own Constitution

Our boy made me an ice-cold latté this morning. Naturally, it's quicker and smoother with fewer mistakes for me, a thirty-six-year-old adult, to make it than a three-year-old. But I let my son handle it if that's what he wants to do.

I never get mad at him if he spills the milk. It's part of my constitution not to get upset over my son's mistakes. Instead, I teach him how to clean it up.

Life is full of mistakes, and it's important to be able to deal with them. I think that getting angry after a child makes a mistake will make him shrink back and grow up to be an adult with a fear of doing things wrong.

The other day, I gave a lecture at Tsuda University. Afterward, I had tea with some students, and they asked me various questions. Several said they didn't know what they wanted to do with their lives. I think this happens when parents force their children to do things that they wish for or when they blame them for making mistakes.

I believe this is something we should take to heart. Education isn't only about teaching math, grammar, or English. Teachers and tutors are often more skilled at teaching these subjects than we are, and we should consider the kind of education that we want to provide our children.

Daddy Will Always be with You

I recently had the opportunity to spend time with a four-year-old girl. While we were playing, she sang a song to me. After finishing, she told me, "I get sad after I sing that song. It reminds me of Daddy." Her father passed away when she was two from an illness that was similar to mine.

I didn't know what to say. The best thing to do in a situation like that is to draw out the other person's words and reassure them.

"What did your daddy often say to you?" "He said he'd always be with me." "Yes, he'll always be with you for sure." I looked up at the sky, trying to let gravity help stop the tears from falling. I couldn't cry. I wasn't going to let this girl think that her singing had made me sad.

"People continue to live on in someone else's heart, even after they pass away."

People have said that to me on several occasions. I never quite got it, but the little girl's honest words finally made me understand. Even after a person dies, they can still continue to give someone moral support.

I Have Faith in You and Yu

"Parents will always worry about their children," my mother-in-law said to you, and it made me uncomfortable.

A parent's doubts and anxieties can only cause stress for their children. I believe the main

goal of raising children is to foster their independence. To achieve that, we need to have faith in our kids and leave things to them instead of worrying.



Even after I'm gone, I know that you will both be independent. That's why I'm not worried. I have faith in you and Yu.

I know I'll sound like a doting dad who spoils his kid, but our son is really a good boy. For example, I'll make tempura, and he'll say it's the best.

I heard that one of our son's older friends bullied him. Maybe it's immature of me to say this, but I don't like this friend. However, he's probably seen as a good kid in his parents' eyes. The biggest risk of being a doting parent is that it's difficult to notice when your child is causing harm to others. I'll have to be cautious as well.

don't accumulate stress.

I heard that this older friend himself was being picked on by his older brother, who, in turn, must have his share of stress. Maybe their parents treat the two boys differently. Maybe the parents are also stressed out. Perhaps the first step in getting rid of bullying is for parents and adults to stop accumulating stress.

When a parent takes out their stress on their children, I think it's like creating a monster who continues to get violent, steal from, and force their classmates to do things they don't want to do. Let us take note of that and be careful.



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