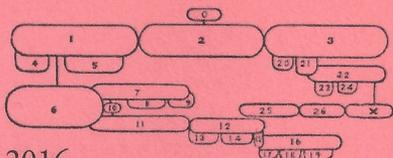


# So We Have Been Given Time Or (Excerpt)

by Sawako Nakayasu



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A Present Tense Pamphlet

SO WE HAVE BEEN GIVEN TIME OR

Sawako Nakayasu



characters: geography enthusiast, twice removed.  
brother, as in your.  
or as in oh.  
young czech intellectual, female.  
estranged or expatriated cousin, male.  
young man of marrying age, recent dumpee.  
his too-kind mother, a goose.  
owner of the voice on the answering machine.  
soccer player whiffing a penalty kick.  
bartender outside of his natural environment.  
innocent spectators.  
fish butcher.  
man later determined as yang, the active male principle.

directions: away.  
comma.  
cross-country.  
relational advisings push up closer or against.  
downstage from boston.  
75-degree angle from the ground.  
buy this very expensive painting right now.  
exit with purpose and earliness.  
move.  
a wall.  
ask everyone how they got married.  
40 degrees north from a point 1800 miles west.

character: genius in vintage clothes.

directions: take 95 south to 195 east, exit gano st.  
don't park.

time: within the frame.  
too late for changes in the master plan.  
enormous changes at which minute.  
go back for more

character: a new degenerate.  
confessional rock star.  
at dinner tells a bad joke about silence, thank you.  
next

directions: amtrak.

south.  
south.  
sentimental thoughts on a train, by the window, with a paper cup, an old cup of tea.  
cup as focus or locus, as if it starts with

time: shortened by ice floes departing downriver.  
moreshortened by clouds reflecting samely samely on such

place: directions.

directions: get on the subway, any system.  
buy a bag, get sneaky about it.  
ask the right questions to the unsuspecting.  
open an unmarked door in the

directions: more crying.  
trans-atlantic

character: person with both eyes closed in heathrow airport.

directions: a phone number has x as a digit.  
begin to suffer.  
run alongside, parallel to time as if this is done all the time.  
stay in airport for pragmatic or hugely contentious reasons.  
read as little as possible into the voice on the phone.

character: the arrived and the recalcitrant.

directions: stub.  
stun gun aimed at

time: encapsulates itself or is wrapped, flea-bomb or christo.  
dead-ring circus.  
laugh out loud for the last

time: given.  
prove.  
innocuous to the end but stunned all the same

character: stunning.  
in an orange bar.  
change of heart to be determined the following year.  
kissing buttress held up by

time: out for a breath of freezing.  
glacial, escaping, wrought about.  
fevered with resentient beings.

time: one minute remaining

time: on a residual penalty

time: give it up for an interlude.  
for a personal interview.  
impersonal sick day.  
personal reasons for breaking up every

time: one standard

time: one minute plus one continent plus one long car ride

time: stilled.  
not enough

time: slowed by layer upon layer of clothing and excess.  
accessories as condiment.  
scarves, a length of

time: given.  
running.  
in appropriate.  
eating someone else's

time: conspired to the point of friendly distortion.  
friendly distortion.

variation: father, as in oh.

place: electronic.

directions: perpetual east, past every torso.  
field, a question.  
field every physicality.

directions: don't say anything or don't say something.  
ask, away.  
keep mouth full of time.  
take it or eat it.  
to go.  
a heart full of

directions: fill the blank heart with blanks.  
shot through the night.  
in a foreign bar.  
after eating.  
after day, its false safety.

character: meet you at such or which place.  
everyone not this

character: family.

character: history.

character: years, a large percentage.

measure: all in the same season, but spanning many years and tears of foolish sincere  
youth and promise and no bells just beings and theres and a lost token or  
touch, resting on the shoulders of a couple of tenuous

characters: here unnamed but tender nonetheless and resting as usual on the  
fragmentary exchange of

character: in relation to an international picket fence.  
brimming with

directions: gotiate.  
golightly.  
findings.  
from any angle.

directions: continue, or  
make more tea.

enter one more

character: countless.  
immeasurable.  
at great lengths.  
what does this mile mean.  
what if to mean is not to know.  
what kind of knowing could now matter.

directions: take train from one night into the next.  
against all willing parties.  
the trouble with train station employees who would help if only.

variation: getting off.

variation: not getting off like that

character: complected and turning lovely.  
at the off-chance.  
turning complected.

place: still towards on.  
to ward off

directions: ignore the overhead exclamation.  
interpret silently, personally.  
silence to be stowed away.  
acknowledge without response.

directions: how long to continue is a matter of

directions: are being given still.

character: no one of good would get off like this.  
turns dark and lovely.  
with mildly contentious reason.  
falls into the wrong

hands: together in unsettlement

hands: cathedrals everywhere

hands: across a passing object.

place: framed in a false photograph.  
framed in a written note.

given notes.  
 undelivered unnoticed

sound: phone call from the other side.  
 long.

sound: english everywhere.

sound: not english everywhere.

set: balcony outside a bus.  
 same set of stoppage.  
 snow.  
 snow.  
 more snow.  
 less.

set: get out

directions: lean against or away from joy.  
 a considerate and considerably large mogul.

characters: overaged intellectuals behind an unmarked door.  
 someone's need to shave.  
 walking uphill in a lovely.  
 hold baggage in a lovely.  
 sandwiches are a lovely

place: tenuous aim at place.

pause: take all of it for a momentary walk in the park.

time: go.  
 fatten.  
 bus.  
 train.  
 go.  
 car.  
 load.  
 load.  
 a loaded

sound: tenuously in french.

pause: as never having happened.

sound: a mouth full of food.  
inverted umbrella.  
kindness of old friends.  
kindness of old people.  
getting wet at the wrong time.  
drinking in.  
a long

sound: of thirst.  
long hunger.  
rolling.  
growl.  
kindness of men.  
beer at the wrong nation.  
beer at the right nation.  
timing full of beer.

character: still.  
and still.  
and still.  
teasing out the lovely.  
looking up the lovely.  
mucking up potential lovely

directions: toward more tenuosity.

time: slowing.  
increasingly angular.

slowing.  
more viscous.

vicarious.  
vicious.

quiet.  
more viscous

direction: which train.  
which trust.  
every vehicle a person.  
every person a vehicle.  
residual vehemence.

direction: away.  
apostrophe.

cross-road.  
 offstage.  
 do nothing with immediacy.  
 exit from a lack of

setting: flimsy joy.  
 forthcoming, to be detained.

plot: of coastal illness.  
 a sweeping malaise.  
 stranger grandma.

character: female or persuaded.

directions: 5 south.

character: pervasive.

directions: border.

offstage: false balcony.  
 false alas balcony.  
 false false illusive balcony.

character: on stage.  
 a lack, effort.

theme: present day.  
 against all struggle for

irony: cathedrals everywhere.

direction: mexico.

time: wrap it up.

time: breaking.

time: tied up.  
 bound.  
 affixt.  
 fettery.  
 up.  
 pinioned.  
 pressive.

pressure: san ysidro crossing.

place: ready-made street.

time: catered.  
breaking everywhere.

costume: shedding.  
shedding light.  
shedding weight.  
what changes.

consume: daylight.  
time.

make: not good time.

place: approaching tendency.  
that face.  
that voice.  
that situation.  
have been there before.  
have not have not.

resolution: unsolicited

climax: a year ago

leading: here and here.  
all heres on deck.

spoken: all hail.

sails: an interlude of water.

continuous: cathedrals everywhere.

characters: no practicing.  
practicing to be a spectator.  
practicing the cross.  
crossing the bend.  
bending a green card.  
holding on, mere innocence of

characters: keep.  
kept.

keep.  
 uncalled for.  
 dropping.

dropping: people.  
 a grounded folk.  
 the ground in the fork.  
 fork to mouth.  
 to ear.

phone: call.  
 call from a dark.  
 call from a long white patrol.  
 and yet and yet a noplacement of origin.  
 gives rise to the usual propensity games.  
 that we thought we thought were too old to still be playing.  
 still.

language: topography of emotional gunned forth and slight outbursts.  
 thirdhand transversal.  
 striangulation.

regulated: by geographical prejudice.  
 barred like a dog.

plot: tijuana consistency.

place: her sense of we've been this way before.  
 we've been this way before.  
 we've been had this way before.  
 having had children and where.

place: breaking it up.

time: breaking it up.

conflict: blanking it up.  
 filling in blank forms.

conflict: blanking on memorized eye chart.

conflict: blanks.  
 blanket.

blankly: the whites of.  
 blinkings.

blinking to get heard.  
blinking to cross.  
linked to a long history of lines, many thicknesses.  
thickness.  
drawn out

moments: conclusions everywhere.

plot: fishing for

characters: who.

characters: subject.

characters: subject to

plot: action as discovered on the line.  
gunning for.  
gunning forth.  
stun gun aimed this time at

plot: split.  
then.

characters: make a long sound.  
the kindest attendant at the lastest hour.  
with no language at all.  
or practical

plot: a letter.  
lengthened wait.  
exchange.  
handed over all personals.  
letter and person.  
a secret car.  
sheets.  
illness.  
sleep.  
approaching the tenuous land with a breath of fresh.  
sleep its length through.  
a woman turns kind.  
borders act with temporary gentle.  
with gentle tenuous.  
directed toward the familiar foreign.  
tenuous yet owned unapologetically.  
tenuous yet distant from actual source.  
tenuous lovely to glance from a distance.  
tenuous lovely beaming away or rolling past.  
tenuous on its own terms.  
tenuous on its own turfed country.  
tenuous because and acceptingly and free to be on its own tenuous lovely  
ground.  
tenuous grounding itself instantly solidly as a matter of factual discourse or  
resolution.  
tenuous and over or over it or over itself as an acceptance as an  
acknowledgement.  
tenuous and even perhaps fake or unreasonable yet coming into its  
tenuously owned term.  
tenuous its turn and turning.  
tenuous because every character affected.  
tenuous and attaining towards.  
tenuous as light would have its way with.  
tenuous you, might dare say a place.  
tenuous or a name.  
tenuous or an act of nebulous yet sincere

tenuity: all of the below.

below: in the light of many many years accrued.

years: 1988—2000.

1993: declaration.

1994: proof.

1995: phased solid and clear but not ice.  
under influence of.  
under blue.  
under neatly.  
telephone.

telephone: inadequacy begins its head.  
negotiations on everyone's dime.  
pointing to an obviously obscure.

direction: this, in such obvious obscure

direction: this, in the tender present from above.  
obviously obscure gift from above

direction: make a series of choices.  
an old chaos or home.  
sameness of street.  
just after a big birthday.  
birthday loaded with.  
clarity or joy.  
fast breath of

language: diminutive name or clarity.  
familiar name or truth.  
and truth.

game: checking the right box.  
recapturing the flag.  
a game of story.  
a marionette.

plot: safe to eat.  
for most intents and persons.

time: shared.

plot: return to as opposed to remember.

declared: 199x the year of

plot: memory wins out.

declared: first born yang-ish.

plot: birthday cake holds its ground after many too many parties.

cake: as sugared tenuous example.  
as necessary edible element.  
as easy as any other baked good, a whole lineup of mothers with their sleeves rolled up, revealing muscles, definition, tension, not as a result of baking, but for some given flighty moment using cake as

resistance: to tyranny.  
 skip: old news.  
           conceptual children.  
           extenuous present stance.  
 time: discontinued  
 time: standard chinese  
 time: tenuous to the end.  
 eat: safely.  
       other dangers called  
 reality: of old friend.  
           same child, larger version.  
           wasted arms.  
           new neighbor.  
           more dangers called  
 children: being in love with.  
           desire to protect.  
           owning a couple.  
 set: a familiar clutter.  
       bustle of young laughter hung up on the walls.  
       falls into place which is to say face or floor or recovery time not included.  
       whose face to save  
 time: intent from the get-go and to the end, and asking for it.

time: enough to get sick.  
enough to get sick from a big holiday.  
enough to watch more than sufficient numbers of luggage thrown from  
more than sufficient numbers of flights with more than sufficient love in  
the form of this

song: bossed in from downstairs

song: she'll be coming.  
play the manon for the kid.  
when she comes.  
play the kid for the mom.  
play mom and sing.  
the little boat.  
the dusty boat.  
try not to get worried.

time: enough to get better.  
in the countryside.  
more than sufficient to eat.  
to leave it as such.  
matter of consumption.

back: in the city.  
on the floor.  
when the neighbor picks up a bar on the way home from

not work: what sculpting.  
what writing.  
what artists wouldn't and would do.  
listen to what someone has said from afield, drifting, edged and trying.  
to enact what with a vengeance.  
to give what with a vengeance.  
to show up with a vengeance.  
many many elsewheres and others.

proof: by photography.  
by absence.

dementings: this doesn't qualify.

qualifications: hold true in specified light.  
hold truth in a handbag.  
hold two hands in one pocket.  
hold any two hands together in any given circumstance such as

cathedrals: everywhere.

specifications: standard human operational temperature.  
built-in cooling system.  
a

light: which may need to take place in the form of connection, which may need to take place in the form of touch, which may need to take place in the form of skin, which may need to take place in the form of someone shipped in from elsewhere, which may need to take place on the horizontal, which may need to take everyone back to the beginning of the story, which may need to take more time, or more story, or more places than this, which may need to take place in the form of several or multiple people getting together and conspiring as to light or no light and what kind of light and how much intensity is ours for the controlling and how much light is ours for the keeping or having or holding touching all the whiling doling out and tending the keep, last keep of light tripping availability from this end, that end, this end, that end of the continuum of this particular human conviction and yes, the problem with it all, let us perhaps toss out that convicted light and see what happens.

what happens: not a pleasant word.  
request for money.  
and copies of photographs.  
proof of nonexistence.  
churches lose their meaning.  
churches lose their irony.  
churches lose to more exotic architectures such as a party.  
cathedrals lose their money.  
but children keep track

light: from a child.  
unspecific heat.

what happens: many many years ago a spanish painter wrote some poems that managed to keep, get kept, dug up, dredged up in a bar on a little street teeming with flies and so this is really happening.  
architecture of a party.  
flamenco trilling loudrageous, this wall that wall with this-such proximity.  
bustle of poetry.  
linger of poetry, or its turned generation.  
a civilized crowd.  
enter

balcony: cathedrals everywhere.

everywhere: angles in the architect's eye pointing upwards.  
asking what the fact would do.  
tripped to the first stool.  
narrowed back and slip into morning, squared.  
to the squared.

trip: no longer a trip.  
root of all.  
squared mind, quirreling away at the nearest human traffic light.

trip: on it again.  
an interruption of water.

trip: stay on it.  
stay civilized.

rip: into a wink.  
as in, tear, as in, a, way, from, that, which, is, not, and, otherwise,

better left: to older vices.  
stop turning right.

as if: right.  
right.  
made it two blocks away from home.  
on a familiar vice.  
unflagging or immediate conviction of all involved characters.

directions: angle self towards a free kick.  
buy no more fish.  
buy fish with its water.  
watch them die.  
be culturally sensitive. toilets are for shit.  
bury them in the plants.  
collect tadpoles in a ruinous garden.  
watch them get eaten.  
be naturally sensitive. death of a fellow fish.

characters: this man is mad.

characters: this woman is sad.

characters: this man this woman in the form of a collision in a narrow stairwell  
narrower than his belly her ass in the form of what is this good for nothing  
to do with nothing to do with the force of collision but you, friend, get out

Mashinka Firunts & Danny Snelson, eds.  
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