TEXTEASE:

Deconstructing Foreign Language Textbook Dialogs

Let's open our textbooks and practice
The Perfect Dialog:
a conversation between attractive,
middle-class, white
Euro-Americans
who constantly discuss
"The Weather", "Travel", "Sports"
"Shopping", "Eating", and "Popular Movies"
. . . anything
simple
generic
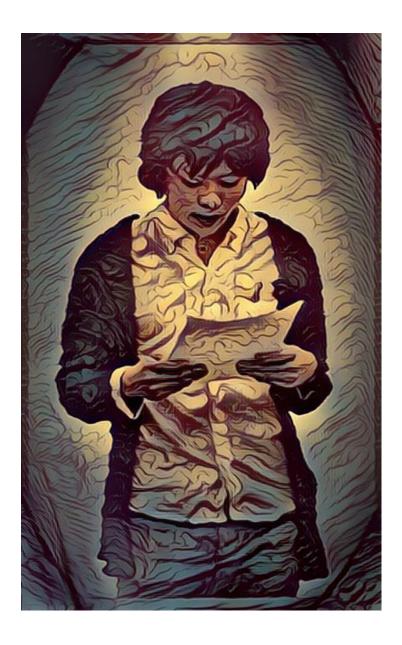and non-controversial

Don't tell me about the world's problems.
Don't mention how ecosystems are vanishing each day.
Don't point out my shortcomings.
Don't challenge my opinions in any way.

All I want to do
is have a nice, pleasant conversation
and move my mouth
without having to think
because when we look at the world
and confront
death,
deception,
delusion,
disinformation,
& decay
. . . it isn't so easy to speak.

Melissa: Lots of teachers teach this way: they follow the book so closely that they fail to really teach.

Liao: Yeah, the real lesson is not in any book or external material: it's in the living interaction among sentient beings. Many aspects of that interaction can't be planned.

Tim: Educational planners find that discomforting. Educational systems in general are orientated towards control and manipulation, and anything not fitting within the agenda is dismissed. As a result, we often get "McDonaldized" education: material that's bland, but acceptable to the ruling hegemony.

Satoru: I suppose this is inevitable. Maybe of the most important elements of education can never be calculated precisely. It's an organic experience, and never the same one twice.