The Three Ways of the River

— Miwako’s Adventure —

Kyouichirou UESHIMA

Seirei Christopher College

三途の川

— 美和子の冒険 —

上島卿一郎

聖隷クリストファー大学看護学部

Precis
This is an adaptation of an original radio script.
A little girl who lives in a heavily industrialized area, and wishes to live in beautiful surroundings happens to have a strange experience through which she encounters the past world. She is miraculously saved, and in time, her wish comes true.

Keywords: Manufacturing districts, contaminate, Star Festival, Altair and Vega, Milky Way, wish, Hide and Seek, flood, body, Tomitatou Island, Uba-Dou, Datsu E-Ba, Shojingawa, natural environment
[Sound effect]: Noises from factories.

Narrator: Miwako is seven and only girl among four children. She was born the youngest kid of Ryouji Kato, and his wife Kumiko. Different from three of her brothers who are shy and studious minded, she’s a bit of outdoor type, never having had much time for dolls or prams, instead she often goes to have fun with friends in the neighborhood.
Miwako lives in a manufacturing district in the southern part of Nagoya.
Lines of chimneys, smokestacks and stench pipes clutter the horizon.
Sewers and drain pipes from factories crisscross the heavily built up area.
Black smoke, gray smoke, white, yellow, blue, and even red smoke rise from factory chimneys. Sewer pipes discharge dirty, foul liquids into cesspools, or sinks, and even the rivers. Smoke and soot stench, and contaminate the air, and the blue sky is always masked by a dark sea of gray. The polluted rivers radiate their stench which wafts amongst the feverish wind.
The whole town is sooted, stained, and deteriorated. There are factories as far as the eyes can see. It is difficult to find any trace of nature. There’s no greenery. Plants, trees, and flowers gave up the fight for survival a long way back. A few handy touches of nature brave the canal sides despite the methane bubbles which surface, releasing a stinking smell. This pungent aroma irritates the nose and hits the eyes with a sharp stinging sensation.
Among this heavily industrial area, just like a flower blooming quietly in a corner of busy street, stands an Elementary School.

[Sound effect]: An organ and pupils’ singing are heard.

Song: Today is July 7th, the Festival of the Weaver Star.....

Narrator: In the corner of the class stands a bamboo tree. Straps of papers, and paper crafts hang from the branches.

[Sound effect]: The song finishes.

Teacher: This is a story of ‘Altair and Vega’ in which a cloth woven princess and a cow head are forbidden to meet except for on one day — July 7th.
A wide river named ‘Milky Way’ separated them, but on that day they could cross the river for their meeting. However if the river is flooded they had to wait another year.

Miwako: Gee, that’s terrible.

Teacher: There is also another thing you can participate only on this day. That is you can wish for something upon those stars and your wish will come true.
Here are straps of paper for you. Please write your wishes upon those stars and pray for your wishes to come true.

Narrator: The teacher passes straps of paper to the class. Soon the whole class devotes itself into the writing.

Miwako: Let see... What shall I wish?
[ Sound effect ]; Other students’ wishing voices.
I wish I could .... Wish I had .... I want to have a cute puppy!
My wish is to go to Disney World!

Miwako: I want to go to a fantastic place like Disney World. But where is it?
Let see .... I don’t know. M m m m .... What else could I wish for?
Wait a minute! My father always says he used to play in a forest near my house. Wouldn’t that be a
great adventure? But, would it be fun?
Oh, I can’t think of my wish .... anyway I want to live among awesome scenery. But where? M m m ...
my grandfather used to say there was a long white beach close to my house, he told me he used to swim
there.
Hey! This is a good wish.

Narrator: Miwako writes her wish joyfully and hangs it on a bamboo branch. The rest of the boys and girls come
and hang their wishes as well.
The whole class enjoys the Festival. Each student creates his or her image of the ‘Star Festival’.

[ Sound effect ]; The organ starts to play the song of ‘Star Festival’.
The students’ singing begin.

---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

[ Sound effect ]; The school bell is ringing. Leaving pupils’ voices.

[ Sound effect ]; The noisy sounds of cars and trucks.

Narrator: Miwako finishes her class in the early afternoon, and now is on her way back home. She walks along
Highway No1, the city’s busiest main street which connects Nagoya to other cities. On the street Miwako
coughs and sputters, overcome by thick exhaust fumes from wall to wall cars and trucks. These automo-
ble fumes mixed with soot and smoke from factory chimneys, synthesize photochemical smog which
irritates her eyes and which clogs her already ailing lungs.

[ Miwako’s coughs.];

Narrator: After crossing the Highway, Miwako turns into the older street lined with shabby housing on either side
of an old highway (Tokaido). The eves of the buildings jut out into the shabby arranged shopping dis-

tric.
Restaurants, coffee shops, and even minor factories stand crowded, with their soot’ stained gate, walls,
or roofs.
Miwako pokes her head into a candy shop to see a variety of chocolate bars, buns, and lots of exciting
confectionary.

Miwako: M m m... It smells good! That chocolate bar looks nice. Let see ...
How much have I got in my purse. Twenty yen. I can get it.
Auntie, can I have this? [She gives her the money.]
Shop woman: Thank you. Here you are. [She handed Miwako a chocolate bar.]

Narrator: She goes outside, eating her chocolate and looks through a huge window on a door, inside there is a line up of toys; the silver bear family, Rika dolls, space shuttles, or many other games can be seen. It's a cheap toy shop.
Even through the window is smeared with soot for Miwako it is a paradise zone.

Miwako: Gee, I wish I could have a lot of money, then I would buy them all.

Narrator: Still chomping at the chocolate bar, she sees a small bookstore, it is as small as telephone booth. In front of which oil-stained magazine fluffly by wind, a bright sun ray reflects on their front covers makes them shine brightly.
She turns several pages of the magazine — Elementary Freshman — handsome boy, and girl's with their freshman faces show their rosy cheeks and white teeth. Although she can't help flickering through the pages, she soon gets bored of it, and steps inside the shop. Just as she tries to lift a comic book from the shelf an old bald man with a reproachful glare comes over her, so she gives up.

Narrator: It's now two p.m. As the afternoon continues, the sun still shines on the land, drying up several days of rain.
It is wonderfully fine for the first time after several rainy days, and no sooner has Miwako got home from school, she drops her satchel on the front porch and gets ready to go out to play.

Miwako: I'm home, Mom! Going out to play. Gatto wants me to play with her.
Bye.

Narrator: As usual Miwako bounds out of the house fully intent on getting her hands dirty. Same goes for the rest of her friends in the neighborhood.
She crosses Tenma Street and can see the house of her best friend Gatto.
The large headstone peeping from Gatto's front yard becomes larger as she gets closer. The family are masons and store their unfinished business in the front garden.

Miwako: Hey! Can we play together?

Gatto: (Inside) O.K, I'm coming.
[She comes out.] Hi!

Miwako: Shall we play 'Hide And Seek'?

Gatto: No, I don't feel like it.

Miwako: Oh? Why not?

Gatto: I've got a cold.

Miwako: You look all right!
Gatto: To tell you the truth, I’m bored of ‘Hide and Seek’.

Miwako: Oh, don’t. O.K, Let’s toss for it! (They toss up.)
Oh, I won. Let’s play the game. Which role do you prefer?

Gatto: I’ll take ‘Seek’

Miwako: O.K. I’ll ‘Hide’.

Narrator: Miwako goes out for searching a hiding place while Gatto covers her eyes while facing a tree.

Gatto: Are you ready?

Miwako: (In a distance.) Not yet!

Gatto: Are you ready now?

Miwako: No, I’m not. I have to hurry! Where’s a good spot?
Is there any? What? A cat!

Narrator: In front of Miwako sits a small cat. It has a bell on its neck. There’s no ring sound since the cat has fixed its stare on Miwako. A curious stare, A “follow me if you dare” kind of stare.

Miwako: M m m...... It’s a cute kitten.

Narrator: Suddenly the cat darts away, bell tingling. It disappears down a small path between two houses.

Miwako: Hey! Where has it gone? Let me see... Now this looks like a good hiding place. I think I’ll follow this cute kitten.

Narrator: The path is small, shutting off the warm and bright afternoon sun.
She can hear the tingling sound from the cat’s bell. It is distant, and fading fast. She follows the sound, along the small path. She grazes her arm on the brick as she squeezes through the narrow alley.

[ Sound effect ]: Gloomy, awesome music.

Miwako: This is getting dark, the walls are cold too.
Let me squeeze in, gosh, too tight. Where’s my foot? I can’t see.

Narrator: Suddenly like a heavy blanket coming down to smother her, she feels claustrophobic. She twinges with a sense of insecurity. She changes her mind.

Miwako: Gosh! I’d better give up this place!
Narrator: She wants to go back, but it's a struggle to move her shoulders as she turns her head to look back. In spite of the tightness, she tries to change her posture. Then suddenly a sensation of heavy pressure on her chest choke her breadth.

Miwako: Gosh! What? Can't breath, Ga! ...........

Narrator: Miwako tries to inhale expanding her lungs, but in vain.
She thinks if she couldn't breath she may die. The thought increases the panic. She struggles more, desperately using all her power. All of sudden her panic is released. The pressure had eased.
Her struggle dissolves and a sense of calm overcomes her.

Miwako: [ Breathless ]... Oh, .....I am saved! "Brrr!" it's getting cold.

Narrator: A sense of serenity washes over her. She feels like she's floating.
Embarrassed,

Miwako: I wonder what that was? I'm OK!
That was close, where are you? Gatto.
I can't see you, where did you go?

----------SILENCE----------

I'm OK! Gatto. That was close?

Narrator: The passage seems to have darkened much more. She feels her way in the dark. Then in front of her she senses an encroaching object. Something overwhelming. She feels chilly. She shudders. The cat's bell stops ringing.

Miwako: My God! What's going on? A bus?

Narrator: To her surprise in front of her is a big white bus almost transparent color is silently approaching. There seems to be no way of avoiding it, she fears being run over. She covers her eyes with her hands. But nothing happened. She opens her eyes again.

[ Sound effect ]: Shintou-like-music

Narrator: The bus stops in front of her. The driver nods his cap at Miwako and beckons her onto the bus. Miwako, normally the first to taste adventure, hesitates.

Miwako: This might be a dream. I don't want to get on board.

[ Sound effect ]: A big sound

Narrator: A force from behind like big hands pushing usher her onto the deck of the bus, and makes her sit on the front seat.

Miwako: But No, I don't want to.
Narrator: The door closes and the bus moves as if sliding on ice. The gentle glide gathers speed and the view from the window becomes a blur.

Miwako: No, Let me out of this, please!

Narrator: She tries to get out and struggles but her body cannot move as though she was a victim of fox possession. As quickly as it arrived, it stops. An old man with a fedora hat and gray overcoat steps on board. He glances at Miwako, but pays no attention. He sits in the second seat. He gives a sigh of relief as he relaxes his legs. He pulls a green apple from his pocket and chomps from the crunchy fruit.

[ Sound effect ]: The crisp, cracking sound of an apple.

Narrator: His wide open mouth reminds her of something familiar. But she can't recollect what it was.

Miwako: Gee, I know him, but I can't remember.

Narrator: Feeling uneasy, she wonders what the time is. She looks at the driver's clock. But it doesn't have hands.


Narrator: The bus stops again. An old woman dressed in a white kimono reverse, struggles on. She's using a walking stick for support. Her knees look as if they'll give way along the aisle.

[ Sound effect ]: A sound “Hikutan” “Hikutan” is heard.

Miwako: She looks like my great aunt, who died when I was a small kid.

Narrator: The old lady glares at Miwako. She blinks, then moves on. Once again the expression on the person's face reminds her of something, but she still cannot recollect. The bus makes another stop. It halts in front of a tall and bald headed man. He's wearing thick milk bottle specs. He lowers his head to get on, almost hitting his huge skull on the ceiling of the bus.

Miwako: Wow! What a big man! Look at his huge head!

Narrator: He sits, awkwardly, panting as his huge shoulders and lungs grasp for air. He turns and glances at Miwako, scratching his head and flaking his dandruff into the atmosphere.

Miwako: Poh! Your disgusting.

Narrator: At the next stop, a slim and sickly man rushed on board. He starts to weep. He explains with stuffed nasal voice that 23 years ago his mother died, followed 11 years later by his son. He himself had died under the wheels of a train eleven years before his son. He questions (in Japanese) why history (Rekishi/Dekishi) has repeated itself. The man continues to wail and moan. His tears fall fast like flood water from his tightly shut eyes. Simultaneously Miwako hears the rain pattering on (against) the roof. (bouncing off the roof.)
[ Sound effect ]: Patter of rain/ beating of rain.

Narrator: Soon the sound turns into pouring rain. Several streaks cascade down from the bus roof and they soon cover the whole bus as if going through a water fall.

[ sound effect ]: Heavy pouring sound of rain.

Narrator: Through the heavy rain a wide river appears on either side of the road which is quickly narrowing. Now there is little room on either side of the bus. The wheels nudge the edge of the path with inches to spare between it and the fast flowing river.

Miwako: More rain! Hey! Somebody on the bridge. Stop the bus.
    She looks drenched. She's waving! Look.

Narrator: The bus stops along a shabby bridge. A very old woman with deep wrinkles on her face gets on board. Her age seems to be over ninety.
    Miwako can hear her mumbling.

The old lady: Southern mountains get flames all over, and a castle was turned to ashes, and many samurai warriors were killed.

Narrator: To Miwako it sounded more like a TV drama skit. The toothless woman continued to mumble as she sat down on the bus.

Miwako: I can't make out a word of that. She's weird.

[ Sound effect ]: The heavy down pour continues.

Narrator: Miwako still has no idea where the bus is going. A dark cloud already covers the whole sky from horizon to horizon.

[ Sound effect ]: Lightening cracks, the sound shakes the floor, more lightening cracks, and thunder, claps and shudders. A strong wind whisks the falling rain against the bus which is jostling to and fro.

Miwako: O, My, this is getting too scary...

Narrator: With a rush of water from behind, the bus rocks and rolls more like a boat.
    The bus is being carried away with the flood.

[ Sound effect ]: Lightening cracks, thunder, roaring flood sound.

Narrator: Timbers, kegs, wooden boxes, swelling bodies of cows, pigs, and snakes swirl and swoosh around the bus. In the sky, dark cloud are blown down furiously by the angry wind. The bus is sinking, the passengers resemble life in a deep freeze.

Miwako: Screaming.
Narrator: Outside the corpse of a man's body thud against the window by Miwako's side. She covers her eyes in fear.

Miwako: Screaming.

Narrator: The body has swollen, his eyes have popped out, his tongue hangs from his open mouth. Another swollen body hits against the bus door, the white face portrays a mouth-less, eye-less, nose-less, and lifeless body, and can't tell it a man or a woman. Miwako covers her eyes again.

---------------------SILENCE---------------------

[ Sound effect ]: Peaceful music.

Narrator: Then, like wiping the slate clean, the dark clouds dissolve over the night sky. In a serene dark night, bright stars twinkle and the brilliant moon reflects its glory on the water. Bravely Miwako pulls her hands from her eyes. She's struck by the serenity. On the horizon, there's a bridge, as the bus gets closer, Miwako can see a girl perhaps a little older than herself.
The girl is waving at the bus, her pig like nostrils open wide.
The bus doesn't stop, it passes the girl as if there was no time to stop.
In front of the bus, a wide open space clears, it looks like a big island.
The bus continued to speed towards it.

[ Sound effect ]: Surge of the sea.

Miwako: Wow, beautiful. I've never seen such beautiful scenery before.

Narrator: The driver stops the bus when it has arrived at the depot.

The driver: [ un-accentuated voice ] You may leave here, but you must return here before sunset, or you'll be deserted.

Narrator: Saying that the bus drives off. Miwako stands alone on the beach.
   The bus depot reads 'Tomita Tou Island' in Katakana. The surge of the sea swells to where she is standing and dissolves into the beach.
   A reddish hue from the sun dominate the sky, reflecting its rays over the ripples of the sea.

Miwako: Gee, what is this place? A beautiful white beach, but there's nobody, and nothing in here. Where shall I go? The driver said he will come back before sunset, but how can I spend my time? Hey! Look at that. A building.

Narrator: On the horizon she spots a building and as she gets close she realizes it is a huge, grand structure built next to a river that cuts into the sea, but she can't find a bridge across.

Miwako: How can I cross this river? It isn't so big, I should be able to find a way over.
Narrator: She remembers that the bus driver told her she must catch the bus at sunset, however her curiosity was drawing her to the building feeling that it's better not to leave this place she decides to stick closely to the river where the bus stopped.

Miwako: What's that? M m m ..... Looks like a log.

Narrator: As the dirty green floating mass approaches it lodges amongst some other branches and reeds embedded in the river. Getting stuck it offers Miwako a chance to cross. She steps gingerly over this improvised bridge towards the opposite riverbank.

Miwako: Hop! Step! Jump! Gosh!

Narrator: As she steps off her bridge it rolls over in the water, revealing a face half covered in dirty green sludge. An eyeball pops out from its socket and hangs on the cheek. It's a body. Both hands have gone. The partially decomposed body looks like its gasping for air.

Miwako: (Screams)

Narrator: Miwako tries to run but her legs won't carry her fast enough. She tries harder. She wants to run more quickly. She cannot get the power.

Miwako: Help! Help! Go away, Go!

Narrator: It falls against the riverbank, mouth open with an expression of sadness clinging to its face, the loose eye glaring at Miwako, who is petrified. She falls onto the ground and grabbing the grass she crawls away from the riverbank. Then, on all fours she scrambles in panic up a little slope which takes her away from the terror.

Miwako: (Out of breath) ............ Gee, I nearly never made it.
What the hell is this building?

Narrator: Miwako stands silently at the gate of the old temple. The wide sign next to the gate reads 'Uba-Dou' in Hiragana. The wooden entrance is already open, awkwardly Miwako takes a look inside.

Miwako: M m m...... What is this place?

Narrator: The temple has a dia-mark floor, and there's a strong smell of incense. A curtain is draped from the middle of the ceiling, half way to the floor.

Miwako: A big curtain. Wait a minutes! There's somebody there.

Narrator: She peeps through the curtain to discover a huge statue of an old woman who is holding a small baby statue in her hand. With other hand, she displays her palm.

Miwako: What a terrible face! Is this Big Buddha? She looks like the old woman on the bus.
Narrator: A low voice groans as if coming from the statue.

Miwako: Wow! (She shudders in surprise.) Where did that come from?

Datsu E-Ba: I was the image of “Datsu E-Ba”, and
   I used to make my living by a river called Shojingawa
   Disrobing drowned people,
   I would dry them in the sun to clean them
   For selling to the merchant. One time
   I disrobed a drowned monk
   Who happened to cross the river after a big flood,
   He drowned in the process,
   I got some money selling his clothes.
   That same evening just after finishing my dinner,
   I felt a throbbing in my stomach,
   Which gave me bad fortune for the following two weeks.
   It didn’t improve, it killed me.
   I had no idea what had happened,
   I discovered from my neighbor that
   I was dead. They told their stories. As
   I listened my soul wandering around the river feeling like
   I was missing something.
   The neighbors around Shojingawa became so afraid of the wondering
   Soul, As a final result they asked for the help of the town chief.
   His answer to their problem was to built a small temple by the river
   To help console the wondering soul.
   Unfortunately the villagers even after appealing to nearby towns
   Couldn’t raise the money quickly.
   It took several years to get enough contributions,
   And the temple was finally founded at the end of Hojyou Regime (1358).

Miwako: What are you talking about?

Narrator: The ‘Datsu E-Ba’s’ story continued. Miwako was beginning to worry about the time.

Miwako: Gee, I have to get back to the bus, the driver will leave me if I’m late!

Narrator: Outside the sun is sinking in the west falling quickly towards the sea.
   A glorious red ripple blanket over lying the low line ground.
   The Datsu E-Ba’s eyes widen. Its stare becomes a glare. The eyes growing red. There’s a madness in her
   expression. It looks like its standing up.

Miwako: I’d better sneak away! Get going! Jump!

Narrator: Terrified by this Miwako dashes outside scared the Statue may follow her and worrying about missing
   the bus. She can see a white spot coming from the eastern horizon.
Miwako: It’s the bus, it’s coming quick. Hurry up!  
            Gosh! What’s going on?

Narrator: The small river she previously crossed has turned into a huge estuary.  
            There’s no bridge, not even a log. She darts to and fro along the bank of the river. Desperately searching  
            for something to help her to cross the river.

Miwako: O...o... It’s coming closer, Help! I can’t get the other side, Help!

Narrator: The bus is approaching the depot. Miwako can see the driver.  
            His sideways smirk. Miwako’s mind is filled with terror.

Miwako: OH! God! I can’t cross this river. Help!  
            Ah, here’s something.

Narrator: It was a small earthen duct partially covered by grass and bushes.  
            It looks just big enough to get into. However, she has no idea where it may go.

Miwako: Maybe I can go to the other side. This is a tunnel. But, this looks terrible. Dark inside, and it stinks.

Narrator: For a moment she stops, reluctant to proceed. However, in her state of emergency she manages to  
            overcome her reluctance.

Miwako: Oh well, here goes! Gee! It’s dark!

Narrator: In front of her everything looks murky and blurred. She gropes around for a wall to touch. As the tunnel  
            widens and as she proceeds, the wall become further and further away. She can’t hold on to the walls any  
            more.

Miwako: O o o o o .... Help! This is slippery. I can’t hold myself. Wow!

Narrator: In front of her there’s a steep falling slope she finds it very difficult to keep her balance. The tunnel  
            continues to forge deeper into the ground.  
            She stops and shuffles her feet, searching for a wall to grab.

Miwako: I think I’d better go back. I can’t go any more. Wait a minute! A light?

Narrator: A dim light sparks somewhere in the distance. Encouraged by this Miwako walks a little faster. How-  
            ever the tunnel seems unending.

Miwako: Gee... Something strange in my ear. A terrible pain in my ear!

Narrator: Her ears begin to ring as the low atmospheric pressure pushes and pulls at her balance.

[ Sound effect ]: A sudden gust of wind
Miwako: Gosh! A wind!

Narrator: The wind comes from her back. She feels the chill wind rushing past. It tastes salty. The wind becomes strong erupting into a furious gale.

[ Sound effect ]: Strong wind blows

Miwako: Help! Help!

Narrator: Miwako crouches, hunching her shoulders trying not to lose control. But her attempts are in vain, the wind accelerates its power, too great, too strong. Now she has great difficulty just standing.

[ Sound effect ]: Stronger wind blows

Miwako: Can't breathe! can't .. I..

Narrator: Suddenly a strong gust of wind grabs her body, cruelly, pushing her off her feet.

Miwako: Ah, ah! A......

Narrator: She's spinning, whirling, circling through the tunnel, flying with no wings Curiously and despite of lack of control, she protect her eyes covering by both hands. For her it's the tunnel that's spinning round and round. But she feels sick. She vomits as her body spins faster and faster. The light becomes brighter and brighter. Suddenly her head bumps against something, the light disappears.

---------------------------------------------Silence---------------------------------------------

Narrator: A few days pass. Neighbors came to Miwako's house, and are recounting Miwako's story. They were talking with her mother.

Neighbor A: So Miwako-chan was walking through chink between Gatto and Matsuoka's house. Then the lower part of the brick walls had collapsed in on her.

Mother: These bricks were quite heavy and Miwako had collapsed under them.

Neighbor B: What's happened after that?

Mother: She would have suffocated, but luckily at the same time the small passage sunk. This was because of the heavy weight of the brick walls, and added to this, a long spell of rainy days had made the ground soft.

Neighbor A: I see. So Miwako-chan had disappeared from sight.
Neighbor B: But, but where had she gone?

Mother: Below the surface of the ground, down into an inlet which had flooded after a long spell of rainy days, and the police said she might have drifted along the River. It’s a miracle she wasn’t drowned.

Neighbor C: So, is that the remains of Shojingawa River?

Mother: I don’t know exactly, but they said that is a part of a river.

Narrator: Shojingawa River, an old natural river which stored currents from the high ground mainly from the East at Imaike Lake and Nunoike Lake, then wound its way from the North to South of Nagoya and Atsuta. Up to two hundred year’s ago, the River was as big as Tenpaku River is now.

Neighbor C: Mmm...... I still remember when I was a kid my neighbor’s aged people called the Shojingawa River, the River Three Ways, that is the River of no return. Once a dead person who reaches the opposite shore of the River has no chance to come back to this world.

Neighbor B: Oh, it’s scary!

Neighbor A: But it’s a superstition.

Neighbor C: I believe this comes from Buddhist tradition.
At any rate, how did Miwako-chan survive?

Mother: Miwako said she found herself lying by the waterfront of the Shinhorikawa.

Narrator: The Shinhorikawa was originally a canal, and there was a decision to reclaim the Shojingawa and excavate for canal transportation to Nagoya. Most of the Shojingawa River was reclaimed except one or two sections which overlapped with the new canal. Many houses had been built on the reclaimed land.

Neighbor C: Oh, so that’s the place where the Old River (Shojingawa) and the Shinhorikawa (the new canal) merge.

Mother: I think she regained consciousness. She said she’d tried to climb over the river bank following the river that she knows would have taken her back home. But she lost conscious again.

Neighbor A: Then a firemen found her there. Now I get it.

Mother: I was called by the police. My husband and I went to the hospital. Oh, how we worried about her.

Neighbor: Well, thankfully everything is settled and in good shape.

Narrator: From her bed, Miwako can see the lines of factory chimneys. As usual, they continue belching dark smog into the atmosphere, added to this, cars and trucks make ear-splitting noises, and a sickening smell
fills the air. Today she is informed that after an appeal by neighbors the area she fell into will be re-claimed to prevent any similar incidents. Tired of reading comic books her mind drifts back to what happened. Now it seems like a bad dream. The memory of dead bodies gives her a shiver. However, she can’t get it out of her mind. She is immersed in this beautiful world. Why can’t the real one be like this? or maybe it is she thinks. Actually, I know that’s what she thinks because, yes that’s me.

Narrator: Yes, that was me, lying on the bed, older now, in fact, I’m now a teacher at the very school where, first made that wish I told you about at the beginning of our story. Our new school stands on a lovely green hilly area. It’s a smaller school now, and I teach our first and second grades. Today I told my class the story about what happened to me when I was just seven. They can hardly imagine such an landscape, things have change so much since then. Even after showing them images, it all seems more like another planet to them, barely recognizable from today’s greener, fresher, environments. After years of social and economic decline, our ways of life changed, as did the decaying landscape a result of years of excess consumption of natural resources. The dirty environments have been crushed. We came to our senses and stopped poisoning ourselves. The factories are long gone, replaced with a healthier way of producing our needs. Most of our urban and rural industrial areas have been turned into farmlands, natural parks and natural environments. Our air is fresh, our transportation systems cleaner. I even made a complete recovery. I can breath fresh air, travel on clean transportation systems, enjoying the blue sky. Now, as I walk home after class, a wide forest stretches out in front of me, far into the horizon. A small river trickles through the forest. Taking the pass along the river I can hear the murmuring of water and the chirping of birds. Through the treetops the blue sky displays its brilliance, a white clouds appears and is slowly dyed by the rosy closure of the falling sun. Fresh, crispy air fills the atmosphere. I walk through a pine forest along a white sandy beach. Inhaling fresh salty air, the white sand beach where gentle white capped breakers wash the shore, the rosy sun rays reflect on the ripples. Everything is peaceful and calm as ever.

The End