

盆栽 Potted Plants

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我对森林钟情有加。喜欢森林，便是醉心于植物，但我对于盆栽的植物，以前却从未提起过真正的兴趣。

森林多木，木繁为林^[1]，恣意生长，自由存在于天地。盆栽植物有木而无林^[2]，被“囚”于狭小的盆中，若鸟置于牢笼，若人投于监舍^[3]，根系得不到尽情舒展，希冀参天，莫若妄言。

森林地阔，可任人游走于其中，脚踩积年落叶，听“泉声咽危石”的声响，赏“日色冷青松”的秀色^[4]，若还年轻，即使缘木而上，定也不在话下。而盆栽植物，大能揽入怀，小可玩掌中^[5]，俯视足可透底，甚或一览无余。

I am an ardent lover of forests. This means I am virtually enthralled by plants. To those growing in planters, however, I never took a genuine liking before.

Forests are lush assemblages of trees growing unhindered in the open wilderness, while potted plants are arboreal entities that live in isolation and, wedged in containers like incarcerated birds or humans with little room to stretch their roots, will never possibly grow into towering giants.

Vast forests are ideal sites where tourists are free to roam as they please, stepping on the thick layers of fallen leaves, drinking in the soothing sound of creeks gurgling over rocks or the somber chill of pine trees intensified by the sun piercing through them. If one is young enough, it should not be too physically demanding for him to ascend a tree. By contrast, potted plants vary in size, from as large as can be taken in the arms to as small as can be held in the hand. A single vertical view can capture their full features from the top down to the root.

[1] 翻译这两个小句，不必拘泥于原文的形式，将意义体现出来即可，合并译为 Forests are lush assemblages of trees. 在原文中，两两相对的结构比比皆是，这类结构制造了稳定和谐、整齐对称的形式美，体现了汉文化求偶对称的审美心理。而英文化则并无类似的审美诉求，除非为了修辞，英语的表达并不崇尚形式上的整齐对称。此外，因为语言文字上的特征，英语的句法构造也难以获得像汉语那种整齐对称的效果。因此，在多数情况下，汉语特有的音韵节奏在英语中再现是不易的。

[2] 同注[1]，不宜直译，表达意思即可，即 potted plants are arboreal entities that live in isolation.

[3] 这两句可合并译为 like incarcerated birds or humans. incarcerated 一词可同时和表示人和鸟的名词构成搭配。

[4] 译出“泉声咽危石”“日色冷青松”这两句古诗的意义即可，不必考虑诗句的形式。

[5] “大能揽入怀，小可玩掌中”这两个小句可用英语的比较结构来表达，可译为 from as large as can be taken in the arms to as small as can be held in the hand. 在英语中，比较状语从句中的主语常可缺省，这些缺省的主语通常是语义比较虚的成分，例如 it、there、what 等。再举几例：The apartment was as spacious as was advertised.、This is more extreme income inequality than exists in the rest of the country.

森林之长，难以穷尽。如今旅游，森林早已成就了一个极好的卖点^[1]，被赋予“天然氧吧”和“森林浴”之谓，而“森林浴”竟是从“桑拿浴”“日光浴”等称谓派生出来的新新时尚之语。游人陶醉于“天然氧吧”和“森林浴”的洗礼，徜徉于清新自然的空气，即使流连忘返^[2]于闹市，想必也并不稀奇。

盆栽植物难以望森林之项背，料想没有人愿意为此打赌辩理，但万事万物皆是有备而来^[3]。喜欢森林，却无力把森林搬进房间，这是房间之短抑或森林之弊？“一鸟在手，胜过百鸟在林。”于是，盆栽植物更有发挥优势的天地。

旷野森林伟岸大气，盆栽植物小巧精致。有些盆栽植物还可变身为盆景，其精巧别致的外形，常常让人叹为观止，免不得充作人们茶余饭后的谈资。有人以此为业，谋生兼及怡情，自然乐此不疲。

盆栽植物是另一种别样的森林，不仅在于它也具有森林般净化空气的实用之功，更在于它能给人森林般的遐思，让人跨越了“只见树木，不见森林”的伤感。你瞧，一盆文竹，弱不禁风，可我凝神枝干，它竟可幻化为参天巨木，硕大无比；我蜕化为蝼蚁，竟能缘木而上，直至稍端；我变身为猿猴，竟在相邻的枝干间，跳跃攀飞^[4]。目之所及，心向往之，踵也似接而至^[5]。盆栽植物就是

Forests are credited with conferring a multitude of benefits. They have now been promoted as a best tourist attraction by the concept of “natural oxygen spa” or “forest bathing”, the latter derived by analogy from the trendy term “sauna bathing” or “sunbathing”. Tourists, immersing in the invigorating fresh air, get intoxicated by the amenity of the “natural oxygen spa” or “forest bathing”. And it is not an uncommon sight that urbanites make frequent escapes into distant forests from metropolitan cities.

It may be undisputed that potted plants are not at par with forests. However, everything has a base for their existence. Much favored as forests are, they are impossible to have in people's indoor living spaces. Is it a weakness on the part of rooms or of forests? Anyway, a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush. This is where potted plants have their strengths coming into fuller play.

In contrast to majestic forests, potted plants are exquisitely petite, and certain species can be manipulated into bonsai, dwarf trees that are often awe-inspiring for their tasteful ingenuity in design, making good fuel for their admirers' leisure chats. When cultivation of bonsai trees is taken up as a profession, it brings a gratification to its practitioners by giving them a living and enjoyment as well.

Potted plants are container-grown “forests” in that they serve not only as an air purifier as natural forests do, but also more as an open source of imagination that alienates one from the regret of “not seeing the forest for the trees”. You see, the asparagus fern, for example, looks so delicate living in its container. Under my illusionary gaze, its slender limbs seem to be turning into lofty trunks, and I envision myself being a tiny ant, engaged in an ascent to its top, or being an agile ape, flying between its trunks with the feet following the eyes to wherever the heart wishes to go. Potted plants are indeed

[1] “卖点”在英语中可表达为 *selling point*，原指产品吸引人购买的某个方面，此处指森林是吸引人去旅游的胜地，可译为 *a best tourist attraction*。

[2] 按照一般的理解，“流连忘返”指在一个地方逗留很久，忘记返回，在这个上下文中，指在森林和闹市之间来回往返，说明都市人喜欢森林，不嫌路远。“流连忘返于闹市”可译为 *make frequent escapes into distant forests from metropolitan cities*。

[3] 这句意为“但万事万物的存在都是有理由的”，可译为 *However, everything has a base for their existence*。

[4] “你瞧，一盆文竹，……跳跃攀飞”这几句描写的是作者的想象，“幻化”“蜕化”“变身”等动词表达的都是“想象”的意思。两个分号分隔的3组句子在语义上是并列的关系，但是可以分出层次，将第二和第三组句子译成并列关系，然后再将其和第一组句子译成并列关系，即 *Under my illusionary gaze, its slender limbs seem to be turning into lofty trunks, and I envision myself being a tiny ant ... or being an agile ape ...* 这样处理，既充分表达了原文的意思，又可使译文句子的结构富于变化。

[5] 这两句意为“用心才会产生美丽的风景，有情才能感受其美丽”，可译为 *The heart makes the scene, and love makes beauty*。原文的结构整齐对称，译文也采用了整齐对称的结构，力求在形式上也贴近原文。

缩微版的森林呢，久而久之，我已能深入“空山不见人，但闻人语响”的境地。

“境由心造，景由情生”^[1]，想必就是这个道理。

我从森林移情于纤小的盆栽植物，一是出于客观世界的无奈，二是出于精神世界的诉求^[2]。我道是：

盆栽藏乾坤，乾坤在心底^[3]。

miniature forests so to speak. Gradually, I start to visualize in potted plants the same vast serenity that goes with grand forests. This may well be described by the Chinese maxim, “The heart makes the scene, and love makes beauty”.

I am getting attached to diminutive potted plants for my love of forests, which are mesmerizing but are not easily accessible in my physical world.

Potted plants as a substitute embed wonder in the heart of the beholder.

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[1] 这两句意为“用心才会产生美丽的风景，有情才能感受其美丽”，可译为 The heart makes the scene, and love makes beauty. 原文的结构整齐对称，译文也采用了整齐对称的结构，力求在形式上也贴近原文。

[2] “客观世界的无奈”指森林地处偏远，作者难以常去；“精神世界的诉求”指作者喜欢森林，但无法接近，只好移情于盆栽植物。这两句不宜直译，可通过 which 引导的关系分句，变通译为 which are mesmerizing but are not easily accessible in my physical world. 原文是对称的结构，译文出于表意的简洁而舍弃形式上的对应。此外，“一是……二是……”表达的是原因。英语有多种手段来表达原因，which、who 等关系词引导的关系分句就是其中之一。英语的关系分句可表达原因、条件、让步等多种语义，功能上相当于状语从句，用于比较正式的语体。关于英语关系分句相当于状语从句的用法，详见章振邦编《新编英语语法教程》（第5版）（上海外语教育出版社2013年版）。

[3] 这两句意为“盆栽里潜藏的玄妙，只有用心才能体会到”，可译为 Potted plants as a substitute embed wonder in the heart of the beholder.