

Title	After the Fall: How Humpty Dumpty Got Back Up Again				
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Translated Versions	--				
Words	375	Pages	40	YL Level	N/A
Synopsis					
<p>The protagonist of this work is the well-known Mother Goose character, Humpty Dumpty. While enjoying his hobby of bird-watching, Humpty fell from a high wall. This narrow escape from death left him with a fear of heights, which meant the end of his bird-watching days. A depressed Humpty came up with the idea of making a bird in the form of a paper airplane, and after much trial and error, he succeeded. However, as he was flying his perfect paper airplane, it flew over the high wall... and he lost the paper airplane he had worked so hard to make. Despite his trauma, he mustered all his courage and slowly climbed the ladder to reach the top of the high wall. This allowed Humpty to say goodbye to his old self and be reborn.</p>					
Introduction					
<p>As we all know, Humpty is the egg character from the Mother Goose nursery rhyme, which speaks of the perilous and irreversible situation where the egg falls off a wall. While Humpty was not fixed in the original poem, this work revolves around the theme of getting back up after a fall. The image of Humpty in this version differs from that of <i>Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There</i> in which he is portrayed as either a dull office-worker or an innocent young boy. Here, he is depicted as an ordinary protagonist; however, as the readers witness him work hard to face his fear of falling in order not to be remembered as a fallen egg, but as an egg who got back up after falling, they cannot help but cheer him on. He ultimately achieves his dream and the transformation that occurs will certainly surprise the readers and make them smile.</p> <p>Saying that one should get back up and not give up in the midst of failure is easier said than done. The message of this work is very simple: "have the courage to overcome the wall," with the "wall" being an extremely straightforward metaphor for difficulties and social barriers. Therefore, readers may have similar initial interpretations of the book, but each reader can appreciate this story better if they can imagine specific “walls” that they are facing in their own lives. have different ranges as they imagine different walls. To me, Humpty is someone who has reached middle age, but is unsure of whether to change jobs to fulfill a lifelong dream. Today, it seems that Japanese society</p>					

has become intolerant of failure. It is bound by the curse of self-responsibility and once you lose full-time employment, poverty is right around the corner. I am keenly aware of the difficulty of taking a courageous step forward, be it for a career change or other matters.

Speaking of the "wall," I am also reminded of the Trump administration's efforts to build a wall at the U.S.-Mexico border. This also brings to mind Haruki Murakami's compelling speech upon winning the Jerusalem Prize in 2009 wherein he said, "If there is a high, hard wall and an egg that breaks against it, I will always stand with the egg." Although Murakami's message may be much more complex, it would be good to read the English transcript of his speech in addition to this work and personally reflect on "walls" and "eggs."

Notes

Part of this text is a substantially revised version of the draft frontispiece, "Seeking Inspirational Picture Books" [Ehon o Sagashini] [7] from *English Teachers' Magazine*, October 2019 (Vol. 68, No.7), TAISHUKAN Publishing Co., Ltd.

(Text: Megumi Kobayashi)