

Lucy.

I am Lucy. 15 (though I would be 16 in Korea) but I am not Korean. Some people think I look Korean but what I am is Brazilian-Japanese (there are a lot of us!) and my home town is Sao Paulo, though as I collect cities this is only one place that I love.

I am described elsewhere as a phenomenon and a teen icon but I have an Aunt who sees me as a failure because my legs aren't long in the Girl from Ipanema sense.

My late father, who being an eminent Sociologist was preoccupied by many things especially me, loved my closeness to the ground, though, and loved my love of beetles which is why I honour him with the name of my current band, Carapace.

When my late father was, I used to travel with him on his lecture tours, as my mum was at that time

indisposed. Unlike me he spoke perfect Japanese, never said boku when he should have said watashi, perfect English (though not as randomly as me) perfect Portuguese Spanish and French.

So my city collection began through him, traveling to Rekyavik, Sapporro, Liverpool or Shanghai on his lecture tours though not necessarily in that order.

When I was tiny I used to hang out at the hotels and play with the Filipina chambermaids tuning into their Tagalog, but later I would roam, with his discreet encouragement, these cities.

Now that I am grown (I don't anticipate growing more) I can look back and recognize his incredible tact. Maybe he brought it with him, intact, when at 12 he came with his parents away from Japan to Brazil. Like, he never said, "Don't go there, it's dangerous" just gave me some local currency and a map with holes

in - where the places he didn't recommend had been carefully cut out.

After he suicided I had a Cinema Paradiso moment when I found all the cut-outs stored in his

burgundy briefcase where he kept his Japanese grooming knick-knacks; ear cleaners, nail clippers, and so on. I put all the pieces on a table and made a fake city with two Kings Crosses (London and Sydney) and a Bronx next to the Barrio Goticco in Barcelona. Probably these places are all fine now – maybe they were never dangerous. Danger is not something we can keep away, or away from.

Because of Carapace, the cities keep coming. (Sometimes I imagine that we tour in an elevator and the cities are floors.) We had a misprint incident in Seattle where we were billed (before we were big) as Carspace. That was funny.

As you probably know, I'm the lead vocals and the rest of us do the rest of it.

Actually we were laughing about it on the Sea-Tac highway that night, which is how we came to crash, which illustrates my point about danger.

I don't remember the crash itself, just our drummer saying O shit (like Cozy Powell's last words when he crashed, or probably most people's come to think of it), and then

I was waking up in a bright room with a huge nurse (US, remember) who seemed to be holding a photo of my mum, which was actually my mum, looking tiny and

for the first time since my dad's death, sober. Unlike my dad she always spoke to me in Portuguese, though her English was fluent, and she said something fuzzy – or rather I

heard it fuzzy because I was coming out of a medically induced coma. She looked tiny,

and long legged (unlike me) and young, younger than I remembered. Sometimes I think it was the relief, not at me being ok, but of no longer having to be no longer loved, by my

Dad. But you can never really know.

Anyway, she told me our drummer was dead (why is it so often the drummer?) and although I argued that he couldn't be, I knew he was, and I resolved to stop collecting boyfriends because he had been one. This is what I mean about danger – you can be laughing almost til you pee with people that you love, feeling as safe as houses, except you are in a van and it veers into a barrier because the drummer who you are almost in love with, is laughing so much.

Speaking of houses, there's a town in England, Blubberhouses, where they used to store all the whale fat for candles, I suppose, which is where the drummer came from. They used to slaughter whales like crazy, in England and Australia, and now they're all righteous while they're chowing down on Lamb. One day I'll go to Blubberhouses and listen for that crazy thick accent, that the drummer had, that I miss.

Once I was watching a movie and I thought how cool it would be to make a movie that was genuinely different for each viewer, so they wouldn't even remember it the same, And would argue about what actually happened in it, and think each other stupid, and then I realized that that is exactly what life is, and that is why I decided to give myself the lead role, at least in my own version. At the time that was helpful, as I'd been sitting on the sidelines for a while, mooching around cities, eavesdropping on my father's lectures (he didn't like me there, it made him shy), writing lyrics. But then, after touring with the band, and the "Loss of a Laureate" as the Guardian dubbed my Dad's death, and "Fatal crash kills one injures four" incident reported by the Tacoma Sun, ie my crash, I felt dazed, like I was still sitting on the verge, months later, where the paramedics found me. Even though we reformed the band, got better known, don't have to drive ourselves

between venues, I still have this verge-like feeling. Something at the centre of me is askew.

Which brings me up to now, pretty much. Tired from the tour, watching actual movies – great ones Betty Blue, 25<sup>th</sup> Hour, Roman Holiday, Coup de Foudre, le Samourai, Mean Streets – you get the idea, spending quality time, not with myself. I know I have to retrace some steps but which?

I could go to Hiroshima (Dad's home town) – it might, or might not explain him; He tended not to announce it as his birthplace; I think the inevitable frisson (the final outer ripples of the shockwave) troubled him.

Or London, where lives the woman that he loved, who wrote (the letter was in the burgundy briefcase) "I loved you from the moment you wept at the symposium".

I had known about her, of course. Children always know. For a while I thought her name was Angel, because he kept a postcard of the tube station Angel Islington on his study wall, and I knew she lived in Islington, and this was the kind of non-secret secret he enjoyed. But then one day he told me how he had once seen a blind man at that station (which has a narrow platform between two deep dark and sooty tracks) who had got off a stop early (or late) and was thus confused and tapping towards an unfamiliar void on each side. Japanesely hesitant, my Dad had not intervened, but then a girl (about my age he said) came forward and spoke to the guy, and led him to where he could retrieve his journey, and he said "You're an Angel", and from my Dad's perspective, they were right by the sign saying Angel as he said it, and as my Dad was on his way from his lover's house to the Barbican, to give a lecture on goodness as a quantifiable sociological phenomenon, this touched him.

Apart from me, and the lady not called Angel, my Dad loved trains. Once we took a trip from Sao Paulo all the way to Peru and Macchu Picchu. On that trip he told me about the Shinkansen that hurtles between Osaka and Tokyo, and then, when we took that trip, he said, remember Macchu Picchu?

O, I get it. We cannot retrace, we are always hurtling forward or tapping toward the edge. I'll buy a dog tomorrow, and when the weather is warm I'll bring him to the park and when the sun has shone on his copper coloured fur I'll nuzzle up and smell the doggy sunshine, and let it all go.