# Meet the Creators of "Sharing"

**Question:** Can you tell us about the moment that you had the idea for the book project? How did the project change as you moved forward?

**Xie Peng**: When I am sad and disappointed, I always feel like opening up my heart to others. That was the initial intention for this work. At first, I was simply trying to express my feelings in a simple and straightforward manner. The symbolism and metaphors came to me directly. I used pencil to draw these ideas down, then posted them on the Internet, and unexpectedly received a lot of encouragement from people. I even published the works in magazines. This pushed me to more formally plan for this work. Then Marysia at Peony Literary Agency approached me, and this gave me a more specific goal, and I quickly finished the artwork.

**Duncan Jepson**: Marysia approached me with Xie Peng's work which was immediately striking. Her thoughts were that we work together, I take his manuscript and perhaps create a clear narrative for Western readers. I worked on some changes to the storyline which Xie Peng agreed and we eventually came to the current finished piece. I think Xie Peng's vision was much more poetic, less directed. I believed I understood well the tones and ideas he was communicating and then created a more obvious storyline without destroying his beautiful illustrations or the fundamental intentions. We seem to have agreed very quickly.

**Q**: How did the story in "Sharing" come together?

**Xie**: This work initially was an independent short work that expressed emotions. The work lacked a clear storyline. I treated this comic as poetry. However, Marysia told me that a lot of the publishers’ feedback was: it lacked a complete story. However at that time, I was nearly finished with the artwork. If I wanted to create a complete story, that would mean having to start from the beginning after years of work. At this point, Marysia introduced me to Duncan, who seemed to have a deep understanding of my work. He helped me edit the work, and made it more cohesive as a whole. I believe that without Duncan’s great work, my work would not have been able to meet its English language readers today.

**Duncan**:It started with Xie Peng's vision and then my role was hopefully to bring the narrative into clearer relief by adding some text. The character is hurting but instead of hiding or protecting himself, he continually seeks another way. Forever trying. Sometimes he pursues the road less travelled but at other times he tries to embrace that which attracts and entertains others. In the end, though, he must pretend to conform.

**Q**: Were you inspired by any personal experiences as you created this story?

**Xie**: Although I love the superhero comics, I believe that my current situation can never be resolved in such an idealized and theatrical manner. Although I have always tried to draw a work that can encourage others, how can someone who doesn’t have a solution for their own problems have the confidence to try to help others to solve those same problems? I figured since there is no solution, it is better to be truthful rather than to lie to each other.

**Duncan**: I like to think that I got Xie Peng’s ideas and sentiments quickly. I think we would agree that although I did not communicate to him until I had finished my work, I understood his view upon reading. Personally, I like to write and make films but I started and established myself in the corporate world before any success in the creative sphere. There are days when the corporate world seems relentless and the need to conform is challenging. But the creative path can be lonely and success is much less common. And there is no balance, there’s no harmony because they are two different pursuits, one seeking stability, the other change.