Between this semester’s two piece of short stories, *Bill* and *Home*. I chose *Home* to revise. Looking back to the beginning of the semester, I hold many naïve thought about writing fictions. For example, I used to think that short stories use plot to create characters and long stories use characters to create plot. During the writing and revision of both my stories, I figured there is no simple principle to writing stories. During writing *Bill,* I focused heavily on the characteristic of the protagonist, almost 90 percent of the pages went to Bill’s interiority and actions. The result, well, is that this short story ended kind of looking more like a character study because it involved almost no interactions with other people based on the nature of Bill. At that time, doing a revision on *Bill* felt like writing an entire new story, only with an already developed protagonist characteristic.

I think the reading events helped me greatly during my second story. As Mr. Alarcon pointed out, fiction came from real life and I took this principle very seriously in the creation of *Home.* This time, I did a very similar process to *Bill,* I developed the main protagonist first, mainly his characteristic. And the process went very easy compared to what I did with *Bill.* Since Bill was purely imaginative, it was really hard to construct many aspects of him and I need to revise the construction even during my writing of the story since there are holes I need to fill. *Home* felt very different. Lao Liu’s character is based on a very familiar family to me, my grandpa, and even though exaggerated a lot and combined with some typical characteristic of people with the same background as him, Liu’s creation is still very smooth. I could always trace back to where Liu started and went from there whenever the plot needed his reaction. Many parts of the story I also took directly from real life, such as my grandpa’s reaction to American food when he came by and visited me. Reading the feedback letters, I noticed that these small details that I took from real life gains the best reaction from the reader. It felt humorous yet realistic.

I enjoy the process of revising my second story, since even though I need to came up with more details that never even occurred in real life, I have something to refer to, and that is the characteristic of the protagonist. Many feedback letters address how they would like to know more about Liu’s daughter and son-in-law. I agree entirely that I need to include more of them in the story and that’s what I did. Reading back, I realize that even though more plots involving the protagonist can surely help build the character. Side characters building can deepen the story, bringing a more constructed world into place. And more constructed world will create a more realistic and authentic protagonist. As another classmate points out, the part where Liu killed the cat lacks details as this is considered a very serious event. Initially I shortened this paragraph as to add more absurdity into the story itself. But after being pointed out, I realize that I need to treat this part as a real event instead of a teasing.

The revision taught me a lot about writing, that fiction writing is about revision a lot. Building the story for the first time acts more like a structural creation. As I write along I see more flaws and points that I need to fill and fix. And only through iterations will my story get better and better.

Suyi Diao – Letter of Introduction