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The **BANANA SCANDAL**

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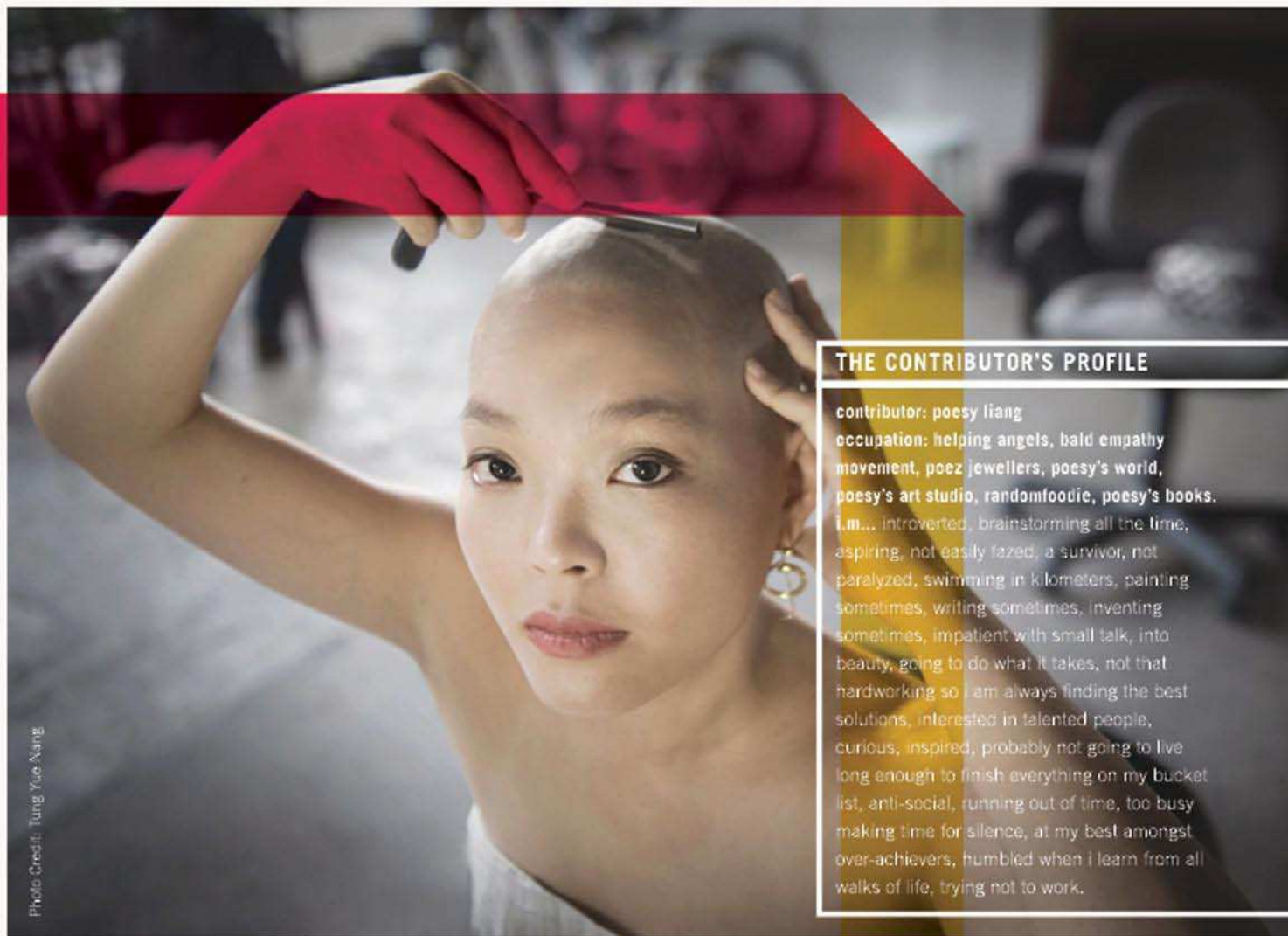
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THE CONTRIBUTOR'S PROFILE

contributor: poesy liang
occupation: helping angels, bald empathy movement, poez jewellers, poesy's world, poesy's art studio, randomfoodie, poesy's books. i.m...
 introverted, brainstorming all the time, aspiring, not easily fazed, a survivor, not paralyzed, swimming in kilometers, painting sometimes, writing sometimes, inventing sometimes, impatient with small talk, into beauty, going to do what it takes, not that hardworking so I am always finding the best solutions, interested in talented people, curious, inspired, probably not going to live long enough to finish everything on my bucket list, anti-social, running out of time, too busy making time for silence, at my best amongst over-achievers, humbled when I learn from all walks of life, trying not to work.

Photo Credit: Tung Yue Xiang

Don't Cave, Be Brave.

She's a poet, a writer, a designer, a jeweller, an entrepreneur and a motivational speaker. She's beautiful and smart. She has a big heart. She loves and appreciates life probably more than most of us. The above description may sound exaggerated. After all, who could be all those things? Describing Poesy Liang as all the above is not an overstatement, it is part of her life.

Poesy's take on independent women today.

"I believe that while it is positive that women nowadays are getting more independent and capable, it has its pros and cons. A balance ought to be maintained, observing the inherent gifts of nature for women to be feminine, graceful, soft, nurturing and elegant. It may not be such a good thing for women to take over the men's roles in society, being independent aside. Kudos to the women leaders emerging in the world now, but don't forget to applaud the mothers/wives/ sisters/ daughters who are doing a great job at home, raising good children and humbly maintaining a harmonious household. Liberating women is good to help the abused and abandoned, but do not let it get too overbearing where women blame the men and forget to take responsibility for causing dysfunction in their own personal lives - I believe it is short sighted when it becomes a warfare between gender. Men and women ought to live harmoniously together and find different roles to approach leadership."



I.M...not paralyzed but a survivor

When she was 17 years old, Poesy was diagnosed with a spinal growth or spinal tumour. It seemed like her adulthood had ended before it had even begun as she was considered to be permanently paralyzed from waist down. Against all odds and predictions, Poesy made a rapid and miraculous recovery a year after surgery. That experience changed her perspective altogether as she was all set on conquering all the challenges that came her way. Thus, she became all of those things mentioned and more whereby many regarded her as multi-talented.

Despite her hectic schedule, finding time for both work and personal time is not an issue for Poesy. "I rarely make room for idle past times. My work and play merges often, so my social life revolves around those various creative hobbies or careers. It works out well too that I can get rather anti-social when I need to be in production mode. As good food is highly important to me and happens to be one of my serious hobbies, I share that with people I need to make time for and maintain close ties," she said.

At 28 years old, life threw another curve ball at Poesy when more spinal tumours were found. Partial paralysis struck her once again and Poesy had to relearn walking after her second spinal surgery. She had to undergo a Cyberknife surgery in Stanford University in February 2006 to remove the remaining tumours. So up till this point, Poesy had a major loss of sensation or control over her limbs. Imagine that she could step on glass and not even realize it. On top of it, her own mother was diagnosed with stage four cancer and required hospital treatment indefinitely. Throw in her various jobs added to the pile on Poesy's plate.

Poesy's personal motto is to live by the *Desiderata*, which is an inspirational poem by Max Ehrmann. To live by this word is actually the key to living your life's desire. Once again, both Poesy and her mother were given another chance to live life's desires as both recovered from their respective conditions.

Desiderata

Photo Credit: Tung Yee Nang

(Latin: "desired things")

I.M...a Helping Angel

The experience and hardship served as an eye opener for Poesy to delve deeper in social work. Late 2007, she founded the online group Helping Angels. Volunteers dedicate to supporting and assisting various community causes. Poesy describes Helping Angels as **"a movement of compassion based on random acts of kindness. It is a group consisting of various individuals all over the world, who practises kindness and does good work, without fund-raising, without seeking commercial sponsorship in return for marketing purposes, without political agendas and without religious evangelistic motives."**

Poesy was very enthusiastic as she shared the activities conducted by Helping Angels. "In Malaysia we have the Thursday Tutoring program that has been around since 2007, where people like you and me donate 2 hours a week to spend time with the underprivileged children at 2 homes in Petaling Jaya. The objective is a mutually beneficial one, where the volunteers will find growth in their personal leadership while they exchange knowledge. We also have Gratitude Letters project in Hong Kong, the Concert Series in Taiwan and California, etc. During the Bald Empathy Movement production tour, we also collaborated with the leader of Socks for Japan during the 2011 tsunami. Members from all over the world followed simple instructions to mail individually packed clean socks in re-sealable sandwich bags along with a care note for the recipients, to date this project has distributed 157,000 pairs of socks to survivors along the coastal villages of Japan that

were heavily struck by the quake," she said.

Thus far, Helping Angels has come a long way since it was first established but Poesy is determined to keep things easy, "There are no targets or forecasts of growth, we just infect others to practise random acts of kindness one person at a time, it is really simple."

Her hope for Helping Angels can't be any more humble,

"Just to plant good seeds to grow tall trees. If more individuals practice compassion and random acts of kindness, the world can definitely aim to get better."

On the issue of whether there is enough done to recruit more volunteers for welfare work, Poesy believes that "it starts with every individual to quit pushing the blame and responsibility towards others. Just do good work without disturbing the peace for others and there will always be people who will be moved enough to join you. At the end of the day, it is about personal leadership which is about serving others, not pushing blame."

HOW TO JOIN?

Find the group on Facebook [facebook.com/groups/558378222](https://www.facebook.com/groups/558378222) and start attempting random acts of kindness. For those who want to test themselves out, they can opt to volunteer with Helping Angels' weekly events in PJ.

I.M...bald

Just last year, Poesy made a decision most ladies (and many men alike) wouldn't dream of doing – shaving her hair off in the name of charity. Aptly named as the **Bald Empathy Movement (BEM)**, she elaborated, "BEM is the only art project under the umbrella of Helping Angels, the mother movement that houses many other small initiatives in many different international cities. I wanted to bring the work of compassion through random acts of kindness to another level, to start exploring into the study of empathy."

"Many people have been asking me to write a book but I did not see a point to do so unless I could use that spotlight to help someone else. Now I walk, but there is no feeling in my legs. Perhaps this is a good time to share my story, I don't really care about royalties for the book as I am not seeking donation of any sort, but only to open a few more hearts. My motivation and intention is to evoke empathy, so we could treat our life with care and have a mindful existence," Poesy said.

Poesy, before joining the Bald Empathy Movement



Some Objectives of the Bald Empathy Movement

1. To make bald **fashionable** and cool, as an empathy movement for those suffering from loss of dignity due to premature hair-loss, and hair-loss due to chronic illnesses such as cancer. 2. Know that we can give our hair to cancer patients by **getting the wigs made** and gifting it as a gesture of love and respect. 3. No hair, no shampoo, less water. Be mindful towards **the environment**.

Source: Bald Empathy Movement [facebook.com/BaldEmpathyMovement](https://www.facebook.com/BaldEmpathyMovement)

While many would have cried when shaving away their luscious locks, Poesy seems to have no qualms about it, "It was a hectic tour and I was anxious to get it over with so I can go home."

As to whether the Bald Empathy Movement has truly achieved its objectives, Poesy cues us to wait this year to find out. "2010 and 2011 was only just the beginning of it all; the stories will only start to unfold in 2012," she said.

So what happened to her hair? "It is still in my safe. I intend to have a wig stitched in Japan, after I identify the young female cancer patient to

present the wig to. This should happen in 2013 or 2014 because I haven't identified the bald girl to give it to yet, I will decide on the country as the project unfolds," Poesy added with a smile.

I.M...too busy making time for silence

With so many projects under her belt, it is hard to believe that Poesy doesn't have a particular memorable experience. "I always target to make every moment an unforgettable one, hence 'memorable' has become a constant in my life.

Otherwise I rarely waste my time," she explained. Doing more farfetched projects, more inspired with painting and writing books, speaking to leaders, composing music and possibly directing a movie are just some on Poesy's to do list in the next 5 years. What a busy gall! However, she advises others who wish to follow a similar path to do it "one step at a time and don't bite off more than you can chew. Enjoy the journey." Now, she is determined to live life more than ever. She wants to help people and goes to great lengths to doing it. She has even shaved off her hair for charity. She is so many things but she is still Poesy Liang. **LM**

