

<b>Title:</b>	<b>Gwai</b>
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<b>Supervisor:</b>	<b>Dr. Suzanne Wong</b>

## **Abstract**

This project is a seven-part story that looks into the intergenerational tension between mothers and daughters, the ideas of living and dying, as well as the struggle between reality and imagination through the lens of a young girl. The seven-part structure is meant to resemble the traditional Chinese belief of 頭七, where the soul of the dead returns on the seventh day after their death: at the end of the story, the narrator grows an understanding toward her grandmother and manifests her grandmother in her imagination. The story is also very much inspired by writers such as Alice Munro and Ocean Vuong, with some of the details being snapshots from my daily life.

This story is a display of my writing style and my outlook on life and language use, as the storytelling hinges much on the ambiguity of the Cantonese language in English translation. The title, for instance, plays on the homophonic Cantonese sound “gwai” which can simultaneously be 桂 (gwai3), meaning osmanthus and is the name of the grandmother in the story, and 鬼 (gwai2), meaning ghost. From the contexts to the language form, these all embody things the unnamed protagonist has to navigate as she struggles with her own growth and relationships with her family. Albeit not the most ambitious nor the most original creative idea out there, “Gwai” is a look at my own identities as a Hong Konger and a woman, as well as a personally experimental attempt at writing more grotesque sensory descriptions and a venture into unspoken emotions in a family.

## Reflection

I never thought the capstone of my university would be a story I wrote, but it kind of makes sense. Writing has always been a passion of mine, even before university. Granted, I was an amateur who had no idea what I was doing. But the creative writing courses I took during my university tenure have not only taught me how to write better, but also opened my mind in terms of genres and writing styles, equipping me with the knowledge and confidence to improve and reinvent my writing craft.

It was an incredible experience creating “Gwai” from scratch, and I owe it all to my supervisor Dr. Suzanne Wong. Dr. Wong has been nothing but inspiring and encouraging during not just my writing process, but throughout my journey as an aspiring writer in university as well. Without her guidance and support, “Gwai” would have wilted before it could flourish.