

The Blood of Taeyoungsan

when my grandmother

sees dragons, she thinks of me

in clouds gifts origami

she crafts

dragons

follow her

from her coastal hometown

Mokpo

across the Pacific

into my blood. dragons overhead

as she

forded the river Hangang

dancing round the moon

full and stars shining. with their blessing

she volunteered herself to war,

a nurse in the line of fire. ruined schools

Red Soldiers. rusty nails and bloodied

ragged chains

threats, uniforms

of the North.

they daren't

kill a nurse, so

across

border and into

Taeyoungsan

(Dragon Mountain)

marching

camping among

tetanus marred

men who died

faces spasmed

half smiles

frozen tears.

"War is war, but people are people."

she called the Red Officer handsome

gave her money and meat of horse

when Americans came with bayonets

and promises of safety. "Good morning,"

she said, her only English known.

"Good morning, good morning."

Pacific Lumpia
Inspired by Diana Khoi Nguyen's *Ghost Of*

mother, breadwinner, pilgrim of the American dream, what echoes skim the Pacific in pursuit of you ? life was hungry there, so you traded sheet metal for plastic, shark fin for frozen monkfish. cartons make eggs now, not hens raised on jungle dreams and by naked babes brown from sun and market dust.	egg yolk binds paper thin flour wrappers folded like origami to contain pork vegetables and soy sauce marinade. clan recipes have voices of their own, island dialects I know in passing only from your lips and the ones you love. <i>Hay nako!</i> I laugh because I know the expression, not what it means. your kids laugh too but through strained teeth. I am a Filipino ambassador thousands of miles from Midwest Goodbye? see how long I can stand here and smile. they think they lead happy lives but but I have a family that awaits me in paradise across the sea. watch me summon them as I fold this side over that one and seal the spell with a finger full of egg yolk.
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Allergen

Did you know that some grass species in our lawns parks yards are
invasive I rolled around at recess and broke out in ugly red hives

Are they called hives cuz so many people are allergic to bees flowers
celery shellfish meat I would die if I couldn't eat beef goodbye hot

pot Korean BBQ with friends A nursing student I know can't eat
gluten I get that she wants to help sick kids but I would

research gluten tolerance cuz damn bread focaccia cake dumplings
gone Luckily my parents' dogs aren't big enough to reach the

counters and steal out food cuz they are bottomless pits I missed
them so dearly but who wouldn't trade two mutts for San Diego

sunshine beaches liberals weed When I moved back home suddenly
I had red hives on my skin How can I be allergic to dogs when all

my life I've drowned in dander skin fur whiskers nails paws
Hypoallergenic products are actually a sham no FDA regulation

even pets can't be totally hypoallergenic no evidence science truth
The company Lifestyle Pets (San Diego-based, represent!) claimed

to invent the Ashera hypoallergenic cat breed via gene splicing
(yikes) but have since ceased operations Regardless sphynx cats are

popular for lacking fur and those cats are the ugliest things alive
with no fur shame warmth but it is funny watching them slap the

shit out of each other because the skin-on-skin impact sounds like
smacking clapping fucking Do vampires really have garlic allergies

like what do garlic sunlight crosses have in common My dental
hygienist snuffles under her mask so she steps away and excuses

herself blaming allergies (it's September) but I smile and agree
because this office is new these people are all white and I'm

strapped to a chair with rods in my mouth You wouldn't feel
comfortable either Who knows what these people do behind closed

doors curtains veils with their drills scalpels fentanyl the best
icebreakers with middle-age white women are allergies work family

If a mother was allergic to her child would she break out in hives
sweat rashes while her insides boil fester expand repulsed by the

invader inside her Eggs are another tough one cuz they're used for
vaccines but they're kinda gross especially because the egg is

fertilized so an embryo houses the virus in its dead-alive body (but
I'm pro-choice and chicks don't have thoughts emotions beliefs so it

doesn't matter) Penicillin is tough too but now microbes are super
evolved so that doesn't matter I have skeeter syndrome which is an

unfortunate name for a very unfortunate allergy to mosquitos so
when I visit the Philippines with my lover I'll be swathed in insect

repellent cortisone sleeves Latex (haha ain't that a funny transition)
doesn't mean a whole lot to a lesbian who prefers vanilla sex or do I

after all I'm not all that kinky if I've only laid with one other woman
right People my age fuck left and right spreading STIs viruses

pathogens it's no wonder humans have so much shit going wrong
when we can't keep our hands off every last good thing (myself

included) There is not one person among us that wouldn't turn
down a chance to walk on water lava grass without risk of death,

pain, or ugly red hives.