

asian american?

yes,
a hearty, emphatic i am.
no hesitation here and now

when i once didn't
know
the definition the meaning
the implication
of the term to be

one (and/or) the other

(yes) i am
the result of a portion
of an ancient
culture

a portion of a twenty year
dosage of an adopted
dream pumped red,
white and blue into

whitened veins under
yellow skin
a maintaining
the tao-ist balance
with tarnished
rusting protestant
scales and blood

stained calvinist weights
of distinguishing
the yin and yang from

the burning
cross
a tenuous struggle
of convincing
myself and all
others that i am
neither

separately but
both joyfully
with strength and oh
so proudly
but don't accuse
me of being

one without
the other
i am therefore
after all
asian american.

Anne Mi Ok Bruining

To Omoni, in Korea

just before falling
asleep you appear before
me, i, slipping

off the foggy edge
into restless oblivion
a vague figure at first
then almost too clearly.

oh the glaring
sight of you, the soft,
hazy words
of hangul sings

to me of sweet notes
from once familiar song
now harboring only
in echoing unremembered
memories, mournfully
dancing in a no longer
innocent unconsciousness.

this is your daughter
your child, dear yo-ja
i myself a yo-ja now
whimpering and crying
to you still
feeling the child
like yearnings
from a previous life when

i felt the comforting
warmth of your steady
self and was quieted
by the soothing
instinctive pleasure of being held and loved.

i see your dark, ghostly
eyes, moist and lined
from the invisible scars
of an incomplete motherhood
perhaps still haunting to you.

your almost black hair
streaked with white
strands from the losing
struggle of survival and not surviving (the
battle)
after all. yet, i see

you strong
and resilient as i am and was
(at one time).

when you were alive
living before
my years at the orphanage
and after you had a ttal

who learned to never
wonder aloud about you
while the questions surfaced
themselves in silence.

i feel neither regret nor
anger and no, it isn't
the pain nor the cruelty
but a longing i ache for
in a wish i feel for
when we do meet
someday after

i have abandoned
you (this time)
on those city hall steps
in seoul that what you will

feel is a small element
of cha-bu-sim
and all of our unspoken
questions will
be answered in the reality
of realizing that
the circle will be

complete, and a gift
will have entered
into this mortal world
for us, omoni.

<p>omoni- <i>(Birth)mother</i> hangul- <i>our native language</i> yo-ja- <i>woman</i> ttal- <i>daughter</i> cha-bu-sim- <i>pride</i></p>
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Anne Mi Ok Bruining