



Helen Cho, *So Many Wind*, 2018

Homeland: Broken Waves/Pizza Parlour

*Home is jargon for bird
in your lap*

- Lyn Hejinian

Just like those boats, whose directions belong to the wind, you steer unmoored from control toward the life from which you want to live. You wanted to give the world the kindness you sought and thirsted for as a child, so all around you the birds never again need for seed. You nearly say *identity* but catch yourself, reel the unwieldy word back into your rolled tongue, scream *homeland* instead.

The crowds in the park sit on low-stooped tables, speaking of shame and change and the broad blue of the sky. You wonder how *broken English* and *broken wing* could possibly share the same word. Two unlike things are joined by a wound.

You are at risk of writing him a love letter; for you, love is animated by gesture (a gritty kindness discernible in the throw of seed), by the reflection of texture (creases rhyme between the dough and his shirt), by the thrill of an inaccessible depth of history (a thousand events inscribed in the flex of his hands). The simplicity of tenderness is a refusal of pain.

The homophonic coincidence of *need* and *knead* strikes you in the parlour. Two unlike things are joined by bread. You live to be wasted by the winds of change, the winds of work. Which of your selves do you want to live from? You try to grab every hand that proffers itself as an answer.

A demon creature speaks with her firecracker tongue lolling out. She receives you at that threshold where tidepools rise

to bloom, a whirlwind in stasis. She offers you a stone from the slanted margin of our ambulatory city. In her four voices you discern the cross-chatter of fate in the lilt of a restless childhood. Homeland is the navigation of geometries of process glazed by the sublime, by the grotesque.

You know the feeling of water on water from being bathed as a baby. Home is the porous border between two homelands, each too close to dream to claim as your own. If no land, death. A passing tempest sends the crowds scattering, a gleeful ripple in the waters of their pleasure. You know danger as intimately as you know labour.

Your father begins to collect rocks in his middle age, fascinated by the facets of each rock's difference from each other. Yet they cross-pollinate in powdery granite, in near resemblance. You remember sneaking into his room as a tiny child, finding a few pebbles--a drawer for pleasure--and a single artifact from the distant war. He was a scholar of garden life and you, all the way til today, search for the sweetness he could never owned up to.

You remember dismay at the magnolia's dead belief that branches bloom even with seeming.

In the pizza parlour the slices are lined up neatly in a row: Hawaiian, Veggie, Deluxe. A human arc animates food: what rises as dough lands as life. You fumble for but can't find the perfect word. *Home is jargon for bird in your lap.*

- By Fan Wu