

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Yukyung Katie Kim: Three Poems

Yukyung Katie Kim · Tuesday, June 11th, 2024

The 84-Year-Old Next Door

I knock on his door thrice: the first one timidly, the second one with more effort, then the last with much character. His youth is being caressed by the Sky and the Sun, taking a step aside from his wife who used to wake him up in the morning, but is now gone far, far away. But my third knock awakens his Soul, stretches his wrinkles, and rejuvenates his stiff legs.

He flings the door open, with eyes barely noticeable and squishes my cheeks so firmly it immediately reddens. The floor rattles as his crutches bang on the floor, and I smile—the particular smile until my gums shimmer and glitter when seeing my next door neighbor.

The smell of Granny who is no longer here permeates the empty, hollow room; the only presence is him who cooked for all four members of my family, waved at me from the furthest end of our shared backyard, and gave me princess toy packs that his daughter used to play with.

The black-and-gray portrait of him and Granny on the backyard that I forced them to take is freshly dusted. There is only one dish, one spoon, one fork to clean. But nevertheless, he patiently waits for me to return back home from school, and he probably is right now.

*

A Typical Story

I fastened my seatbelt,
Opened my bag of corn chips,
Stretched my legs,

Screeching poses;
My all.
The blind camera on me.
Away without fake;

From the glancing smiles;

Tired immediately,

A day.

Annoying the flashes.

All I knew;

The thirty-two opened eyes that were giving;

And all I was away,

Inside.

*

Cuffed

A pair of silver hoops encircling my soul

Every sound I make,

Every gesture I fake,

Every day I wake,

My body fully controlled

I was always a girl with high hopes and dreams

But, what am I now?

With my response to him a bow,

All his orders exploiting my sacred vow,

And all the while, my concealed tears in streams.

I am his wife—well, supposed to be.

I sold my life as a free, young girl,

Just to be his coveted, showy pearl

At home, though, an object to hurl

I will be free!

I must remain still,

Or be the victim, the kill.

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