

Dear Nanjing

You are the mystery
Moonlit columns that step down to the Qinhuai River
Scent of early summer sycamore trees
The lights and rhythm of cars and crowds
The walls that stretched on and on
by the waters, when the heat of August
had not faded — when the setting sun
wrote a love poem, shimmering on the lake

I have not forgotten you, Nanjing
Nor your scent, your touch, the touch of history
on broken pieces of stone cannons carved
Of love, conquer, and hate
Of blood, fire, the heat of a body
My pulse, your heartbeat.
I still hear your anguished cry
Resonated from miles and decades ago —
O My City, who has treated you so?

You think that I have forgotten you, forgotten the scent
of plum blossoms in spring, forgotten the taste
of tofu yellow with crabmeat, forgotten the sound
of winds as they brushed by
my window on the twenty-first floor overlooking
you, bathed in dawn
You think that I have forgotten you
You think I have forgotten—

But no.
I have not.

Because I remember the heat of your summers
The lights on your river
Taste of grapes that lingered on tips of my lips
when Mother took my hand and led me uphill along your streets—

You are the moonlight that reaches out to me
on the other shore.

*Written by Isabella Yang
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