

Paper Cranes

Michelle Yim

We go to school
Our bags filled with paper cranes
Blue, yellow, red, black, white.

We buy taffy
From the old lady's stall
We laugh at her bright red lipstick
Her tightly curled hair
We shake her calloused hand;
She gives us some candy for free.

We watch the girls dance
Hanboks the colors of origami paper.
We are in heaven
Knocking our shiny shoes together
The ones our mothers bought at the market.

We go to school
Our bags filled with torn paper cranes
Red, white, and blue.

We are the same
But I am a monster.

We eat hearts
Entrails of their loved ones.
Hated for devouring monsters
–Things that we are ourselves.

We watch the broken television
“We are lucky”
It insists.

My mother comes home with a pomegranate bruise
She is bleeding
–Seeds spilling
But she smiles.

My mother tells me they do not understand;
Maybe it is us who do not understand.

My shoes pinch my toes.