

I feel we are at a crossroads, torn between the tropic of cancer and the equator. Adjacent travelling lines but our limbs always find a way to interlock. I see two sides of the same coin, where families are large, that one aunt smokes, cousins bicker and babies are bilingual. I followed our family trees with eager feet, pushing off from the earth, with my finger tracing the branches and leaves until I stub my toe on a partition. A wall between our reaching branches.

Suddenly the two sides become clearer, one tree is pruned in a cleaner shape, the branches more spaced out than the other crowded tree. A crisp evergreen, stately in nature. I peer down and notice the pine needles that have pierced the soles of my feet. It couldn't be more different from the shrub beyond the confines of the wall; with its tangled appendages and its littering of soft leaves sprinkling from it. A crooked willow bound to shed eternally. The differences become overwhelming and I can't help but feel overcome with doubt and dread underneath the looming canopy of eyes. It is here I feel our perennial bond under stress from root interference.

Distance grows between us like our respective trees develop. As time passes I feel like we resemble opposite aliases on a compass, rather than branches meeting on middle ground to plant roots of our own. It's not a sensation that stings or aches, but a stirring and spinning that leaves one nauseous and pale. Winded or whiplashed by the sudden altering of a future I believed was concrete, like a playground I once played on.

Perhaps the hurt comes from a wound I didn't realise was still weeping. A scraped knee from my childhood when the tears came from feeling lonely rather than a trip, fall and thump. A boarding pass wouldn't work to bind a wound, like a plaster doesn't compare to the comfort of those that are 1,892 miles away. I know a younger version of you had to digest a stronger version of that feeling in a dorm room, so far from home, with only a two way radio to talk to your brother. Sometimes I believe in a distant liminal space a gingham clad girl with tear stained eyes is asking a crying boy clutching a walkie talkie why he's crying.

How could I not miss early mornings with my Mum and Abuelita? Eating maria biscuits before the heat of the day takes over. It's my grandparents' small patio filled to the brim with family, and neighbours calling down; harmonising with the sounds of conversations below, creating a symphony that echoed across the apartment block. It's paellas in the mountainous outskirts at my prima's parcella. It's arid but rich- the gold dust dirt, washing across the plains when the wind caresses the land. It's a paradise that weathers 45 degree heat and the inches of snow in the winter. It's a soldier with a thousand mile stare watching oncoming desertification and drought with no fear.

You grew up in a different climate, one with the voices of street food vendors calling over the haze of scents and steam. You loved your Poa Poa's house like I loved my Abuelita's but you were and still are more boisterous and commanding than I. For you it was red envelopes on Chinese New Year, your Mother's steamed fish- fresh from the cyan harbour and sticky skin from the oppressive humidity of the city. The people like the cuisine, poached under the heat of the humid atmosphere, yet still vibrant and bold. The airlessness of typhoon season grasped the city in its clammy hands, and the restless child that you were would be ushered inside to practice piano instead of playing sports.

It is I who now feels restless under the eye of the storm. Pre-existing disturbances whip up the winds, winds begin to roar and speed up into a tropical storm and when the winds are too strong, it develops into a typhoon, which spins and destroys. I've never stepped foot in your land, but through a few interactions I have felt the smothering humidity and the coldest of shoulders- neither of which provide any respite from each other. Like an alien seeking the reprieve of a climate controlled spacesuit, I cannot cope with the frost nor the steam. To feel so out of place and alone, that I feel lightyears away from what was safe and secure. It is simply too much.

I can only cry because there is nothing I want more than you- but we couldn't be more different. This martian has no place in the monsoons of this land. So I'll wipe my tears

and try to calm the tempest that has been simmering since I inherited it from the women that preceded me, and wait for the typhoon to decay. Instead I will picture a life where there's lantern festivals and fiestas. Where everybody feels welcome and everyone has a place at the table. A time when my cantonese is less shitty and you can roll your r's. When I don't feel I'm not in control of my own future and when I trust you more to bridge a gap over a chasm of hurt. We'll be together as one; what was once observed to be jagged edges, will be actualised as puzzle pieces that have not yet been interlocked.