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At Thirty

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It's better to live by a park than, say, in Bhutan
 where there are no chimneys, and the smoke
 escapes through every open window.
 There too, though, the body that has been opened
 is sealed again with a language of scars.
 At night I have the sense of being
 swept up and contained in my bed
 until the first of the world shows up, half
 the silver bike handle, ivy flapping in the yard.

Kyoko Uchida

At Thirty

At thirty my mother was seven months pregnant,
 thin as milk and luminous in blues and ivories,
 colors for grown, quiet women. She asks
 what I am mourning in my terrible black clothes
 at my age. Her daughter has grown into no one
 she knows, and she is the one in mourning now,
 for the daughter I am not, for the mother
 I am not.

This year, turning thirty myself, the simplest math
 surprises: my mother reaching twice that age.
 At sixty we Japanese celebrate coming full circle,
 returning our frail, shrinking bodies
 to the ritual crimson clothes of a newborn.
 For her birthday, someone else's daughter
 would send a maroon sweater or a coral scarf,
 but what I want to buy us both is
 a red, red dress.