

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.