

BRIDGE

The Bluffton University Literary Journal

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THE BEST YOUNG WRITERS AGE 14-24

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TWINKIE

John Choe

What happens to a dream deferred?

Maybe it doesn't dry up,
Like a raisin after all.

But ferments,
Like a pot of kimchi.
Maybe it sizzles,
Like a hot pan of bulgogi.

*Does a dream deferred explode,
like a Samsung phone*

Or last forever like a Twinkie?
Yellow on the surface and white
inside, right?
A ching-chong chink painted with
artificial colors,
sponge cake injected with
xenophobia
that never expires.

Didn't you call me a Twinkie,
while you planted a fun house
mirror in front of me,
casting white guys in yellow face,
buck teeth, taped eyelids,
a sibilant Asian accent—
Is this what you see in me?
Maybe we can pull the white out of
whitewash,
And pour in yellow to add more
color.
I want to be the hero
In the next Indiana Jones,
hear my voice narrate like Ray
Liotta in *Goodfellas*.

Maybe we have enough Buddhas
and Gandhis,
And not enough Genghis Khans.
Do we need more leaders
who sip blood for breakfast?
Will the textbooks teach you who I
really am, then?

Does a dream deferred cut like a
surgeon following
dotted black lines on a teenager's
face?
Creating a perfect double eyelid,
or an Angelina Jolie nose?

Since apparently I'm so good at
math, let me explain an equation I
learned growing up:
Stereotypes + self doubt =
prejudice,
the square root of which is
irrational fear.
Now, multiply that by systemic
discrimination
and you get y over x to the power
of racism.
But this equation is unbalanced.
Some of these variables don't cross-
cancel out.
America, we have a problem.
and it's bigger than a multi-
polynomial,
more complex than E equals MC
squared.
America, we have a problem,
and you can't find the answers in
the back of the textbook.

My mother always told me "John,
you have to fight your own fight
before anyone will care to help you."
So let me pull out my Samurai
sword,
I am not your Chink,
I am not your Jackie Chan,
I am not your math homework
answer key,

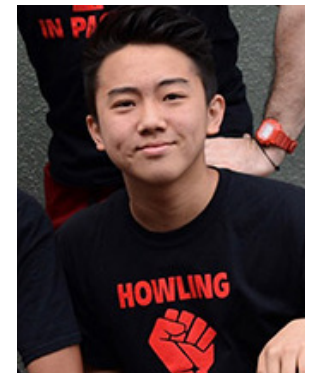
And I am not a Twinkie.

I am a dreamer who sleeps on many
great ideas,
I am a Korean
I am East,
And I am West,
I choose to not trade my heritage
for scan, copy, command + P, clone
models on billboards.

You have force-fed me pills to keep
me asleep
From my dreams through this land,
But my alarm just went off.

it is morning, and I can smell the
homemade sweet sikhye from my
bed,

I am ready to wake up.



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