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WRITING

In Between

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TYPE

Narrative

Poetry

A kaleidoscope of lotus flowers
blanket a pond under
an intricately carved stone bridge.

Eating out of bowls instead of plates,
fragrant ribs in a new Hong Kong crib.

ACs were blowing a cool breeze,
but this trip was no breeze at all.

Smog like an oven
constantly smothers buildings
with an ugly, pungent stench.

As I leaned back in my chair,

I could feel my sweat-soaked t-shirt
stick to me like sweet honey boba

Noises everywhere,
car horns blaring,
shopkeepers yelling like it's Black Friday.

Indecipherable "scribbles"
of the Chinese language
everywhere
I turn.

Back in the Bay Area,
windy breeze blows through
Plentiful dandelions.

Clear blue skies like cut glass,
warm sunshine breaks through like a prism.

A rainbow of new languages and people on familiar buses
from North Beach
to Castro.

Back in their homeland,
under the shared umbrella,
humid, pouring rain led

my dad to snuggle my mom affectionately.

Something I'd never seen.

While me, fooled
by McD's familiar Golden Arches,
uncomfortable doing something that was simple back home,
I looked back at my dad with pleading eyes,
urging him to help me;
dumbfounded
the unfamiliar burger was not enjoyable.

Camouflaged by a sea of Chinese people,
but unable to break their spoken code.

Back at home,
my mom asks me to read the mail again,
a page full of unreadable scribbles to her;
I understand it, but with my limited vocabulary,
I can't explain it.

Having to ask what my parents want
at the Starbucks counter,
I am often embarrassed to speak in a foreign language;
I can feel those waiting behind me start to get impatient,
judging me.

When we're away,
we may both miss our homelands,
but home is wherever we are
together.

Having dealt with language borders my whole life,
it isn't a big struggle nor is it easygoing; more just
in between.