

where you are going. She brushes your hair with her hand as she sits down. Her hand trembles on her chopsticks. You think, *but she is too old to cry*.

In the morning, your father shakes his father's hand. His mother pushes bags of food at him. For the travel, she says. Your mother bows to them both and takes you and your sister into the taxi. You watch through the window as your grandfather shakes his head at your father. Your father straightens up. He is taller than your grandfather. He is a giant.

Your father gets into the taxi, taking the front seat. Your grandfather turns away before the car has even started moving. Your grandmother stays outside, watching you go, until your grandfather calls her back inside.

Your father stares directly forward, through the windshield. Your mother and sister are too far to the side, but you are in the perfect spot to see his face through the rearview mirror. He does not know you see him when he cries.



It is winter. Your father waits in a sterile room. They will not allow him in the back and besides, that would be improper. His first child is being born. About an hour ago, a doctor informed him that the baby is too big. They are performing an emergency extraction. Your father nods along. He is a doctor. He knows these things. He sits calmly in a metal chair as people move around him. His parents will come to the hospital once the baby is born. There is no need for them to be here now, when nothing is happening. Your father is alone. He sits completely still. He is a doctor. He has been in rooms like these a thousand times before. Every time a nurse exits and calls a name, he flinches.

When they come for him, he stands up so quickly his head swims. He blinks and follows the nurse to the back. They say everything is fine now, but it was a difficult birth. His hands shake, so he puts them into his pockets. It is embarrassing; he is a surgeon.

His wife is sleeping when he arrives at her bed. She is in a room with other women, yet it is eerily quiet. His wife is pale and very small. He remembers