

while your sister shrieked at the grotesque, snapped fingers. Just like her, your daughter squeals every time the page turns. “What about that one?” she asks. “What happened?”

“He closed it inside a car door,” your father says carefully. Even now, he still treats English like a subject he needs to perfect. “The surgery took four hours.”

Your daughter stares, awe-struck, at your father. “Wow.”

“You could do this.” Your father gestures to the left side of the book, where the photo of the fixed hand is. It looks almost exactly the same as it was before, but your father taught you to always see the imperfections. “If you become a doctor, I will pay for your school.”

Your daughter giggles. She has recently decided she is going to be a professional swimmer; this proposal is ridiculous to her. “I’m going to go to the Olympics. Maybe after.”

Your father frowns at her. “You are twelve now. You are too old for such silly dreams.”

Next to you, your wife inhales. You hadn’t realized she was standing there. Suddenly, you are embarrassed that she’s seen this. You sweep into the room and pull your daughter off the chair. “Breakfast,” you say. You do not remember enough Korean to speak to your father, so you wait until everybody else is in the kitchen. “Don’t say that to her.”

“Why not? We are not athletes. Her report card is excellent. Your wife showed me. Your daughter could be a great doctor.”

You stare at each other. You are forty-five years old, and you still feel the need to apologize to him. If he told you to go to your room, would you go?

You go to the kitchen instead. Your daughter has forgotten everything. She sits with your mother, rolling gimbap together. You ask your wife about the report card. “They’re her grandparents,” she says, like that explains everything.

On Christmas morning, the five of you sit in the living room in front of the tiny fake tree your parents bought this year. You never had a tree growing