

goose noodle soup in Ximending and dreams of going to Hokkaido at the peak of sea urchin season. In Los Angeles, and now in Seattle, I will spend too much money on a traditional milk tea with tapioca, telling myself that I am simply paying the price of immigration, a tax on an abandoned tongue and a disappeared childhood. I keep trying, I suppose, because I want some reminder of a self that felt rooted to that tropical island in the Pacific, some proof that once upon a time in a humble apartment in Xindian, a raucous family had gathered around the same dining table, wholly intact.

There is, after all—with a cup in my hand—that gasp of breath as that first tapioca ball waltzes up the straw, that moment of childish eagerness, that surge of illogical hope—that stubborn, blind faith that somehow our tongues can carry us back to a place we’ve left behind.