

# Nanking

Mother had little patience  
with us. She lived far away  
from the family she'd left

in Nanking. On bad days,  
she'd teach us with chopsticks.  
Our hands never hurt until

she grabbed the rolling pin,  
the one she used for dim sum  
on Saturday mornings: *kwo teh*

and *cha shiu bao*. I think  
she was happiest then. A-po  
came to visit when I was four,

the last time mother saw her  
mother. The kitchen steeped  
in black tea leaves and eggs

steaming in the rice cooker,  
*shi-fan* on the stove. Good  
for healing. When I was sick,

mother brought instant soup  
to my bedside where she now  
sleeps alone on the other side

of town. She knew of a home  
I'd never seen, taught me how  
to boil the *shi-fan* I take to her.

—Timothy Liu