

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Amber Wang: “Endings are just new beginnings”

Amber Wang · Friday, April 29th, 2022

Endings are just new beginnings

Inspired by Traci Kato-Kiriyama’s “Obon, circa 2020 -or- Fools Dancing in a Time of Pandemic”

from her book *Navigating With(out) Instruments*.

In Cerritos,
the only home I have known
for the last 18 years of my life
sits faded
with rusted steel gates that my brothers and I painted white two summers ago
and a hardy succulent in the front yard planter, with long arms dangling down the side.
It’s the only plant my mom can keep alive, so she waters it religiously.
Every inch of its growth is a record of the time passing by.

We have a tradition of gifting.
When a friend comes over they are never empty.
We ply them with handmade mantous and freshly blended fruit smoothies.
They often leave with cuttings from our fennel and aloe vera or a bud from my mom’s succulent,
so they can grow these gifts in their homes.

My parents gifted us this home.
Every morning, they get up hours before their day starts to make us breakfast before we go to school.
Anytime we call, they drop everything to pick us up from basketball games and hangouts with friends.
Their love is packed in the bowls of cut fruit delivered to our bedroom doors when they know we have a test to study for.
In return, we answer to all the silly nicknames they call us in Mandarin, from chou gou shi (stinky dog poop) to xin gar bao bei (precious heart).

My brothers have all scattered north now, throughout the West Coast.
They are trying on new homes or building their own.

I am the last one here, still rooted.
But I will be leaving soon.

I will miss the sound of my mom's Chinese dramas playing from downstairs.

I will miss my dad's incessant nagging to eat more and sleep more.

I will miss the stray cats that my mom feeds and my dad pretends are a nuisance but he still buys cat food for.

I will miss my three dogs, Mew, Jojo, and Boba. My brothers adopted them as puppies and my mom ended up taking care of them. They refuse to be separated from her now, and they've grown too old anyways.

I will miss my room that my dad painted for me, blue.

I will miss my mom's fennel dumplings even though I hate fennel.

And I will miss this home where I grew up, but it will be okay.

Endings are just new beginnings after all.

So when it's my turn to go,
I'll take a bud with me from my mom's succulent and plant it in the window of my college dorm.
It will grow with me as I build my own life,
a record of my childhood and the time passing by.

And when friends come over to visit my home,
I will give them buds from my succulent
so they can grow these gifts too.

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