

Marrying Green

Before the sun peeks from his sky sheets, a mom leaves her bed made. She's catching her bus, her train, her other bus. The hour-long commute fertilizes thoughts of her servitude days before America but her shoulders relax and a tender smile grows from her daughters glowing in her wallet photo. The mom is brimming of hope, wondering if they appreciate the banana pancake mountains drizzled in real maple syrup and buried under organic blueberries, and the lunch bags with have-good-days notes she has folded.

Her greying hair is pulled back in a hairnet; her old clothes traded for an oil-stained apron; her callused hands masked behind gloves. Her nose cringes from the fuming stove, but her hands toss woks of fried rice with green onions; braise gaping fish with minced garlic and soy sauce; stir yellow wisps in egg flower soup. Her manager gave her the tall, white hat, years ago, but someone still complains, "It is too *something*." Her head bows in apology and her frozen shoulders still screams in agony but her heart, yearning to breadwins for her daughters, still stiffly pulls her body to the station.

After another long commute, the mom races the sun home but her husband is blazing, "Honey, why are you late?" She wants to say, *the bus was delayed*, but her once-singed tongue is scorched again. She plants herself in her bed, watering herself with tv and soft wine. Her daughters studies under artificial sunlight. The mom knows that her girls are well sprouting in a good environment. But in her native language, her husband is buzzing and tonight: stinging. He whips furiously, "I give you a marriage so you can stay in America. The least you can do is help me take care of our girls." The mom closes the tv, thinking, *it's only a green card marriage*. The papers are ready in her handbag, but she's waiting For her daughters to bloom. She is there with them, you know? She is there for them. She is there.

