

Writing | Symposium 2022

By Jodie Meng

Nai nai

It is February and you are unwinding to the steady rumble of grandpa's breaths. You are lovebirds, so accustomed to this proximity in the moonlight. Without command, your hand finds its cradle on the gentle oscillations of his chest, and you nestle asleep, breathing the same rhythm, your beating pulse interweaving with the soft bustle of Beijing. This city will be cold in the morning, the frost lingering on your window, threatening to scratch the surface with sharp crystals like metastasis. But you will keep the guests insulated in armchairs, in hot tea and hospitality, your smiling countenance concealing the cracked glass, the splintering organs, the myriad of malignancies marching from your pancreas to your liver like an army, splattering crimson onto the winter canvas. It is cold outside, but you do not shiver. You curl into my grandpa's warmth like a hatchling, your dreams aligned with his. I wish you sleep as gentle as the falling snow, as peaceful as those nights with him.