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The Anti-Yellow Agenda

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The Anti-Yellow Agenda

I

Exclusive tongues roll-off romantic ballads
never try to twist lips into straight washboards
to take on oriental knots--*zi*--becomes
not our broken English but their broken Chinese.
For some reason, they carry pride in their brokenness
spew ching ching chong at my face as if
I'm supposed to know what that means--*qing qing chong*--
please, please, bug? Perhaps I underestimated them
perhaps they are built to be smarter because in their broken
Chinese they still managed to call me a bug,
destined to be squashed. By whiteness, bless their mouths,
unable to wrap around the zhengs, zhangs, zhongs,
mangling butchering cutting in pieces my name and making it theirs.
Their tongues, coated in white paint, were never meant to move in weird ways.

II

They break my taste buds. No seasoning on my
tofu. This "ethnic" food of theirs never heard of
peppercorn, hoisin sauce, five spice and the difference
between short and long-grained rice and time and water
it takes for porridge vs rice.
I know they've tried because I've tried their attempts.
I bought shields for my teeth against the piercing
steel swords of "rice." Sesame Chicken is not Chinese,
no one back home knows what the hell I'm talking about,
that shit's too sweet for *anyone*, but I hear blonde hairs praising
gentrification of my food. They better not touch my scrambled eggs with tomatoes
fried dough, rice cakes, contaminating my breakfast with some brilliant
fusion--put some bacon on it.
Maybe they're not *anyone*, they're white.
I was graced my first glimpse of snow peas in congee--*zhou*
is the thicker flavored cousin of porridge, so why dress it up
like how you dress up the idea of culture to satisfy
weird voyeuristic desires hidden deep within porcelain bones
unleashed by ingesting broccoli and beef from Panda Express.

III

Their colors are red, blue, white,
but their people are not. White stars on the flag
somehow represent the state I live in.
Even the flag claims only six white colonies,

and left seven red stripes for us, but their people didn't.

IV

My eyes are slits, or maybe mine grew into the kind of slits
that peeping toms try to look through because they
started pulling back their perfectly proportioned eyes to mimic us,
making me wonder if I'd fallen into their agendas.

A kind of tribute to culture.

My skin is a shade of theirs,
but they don't seem to know anything about art and insist
yellow is ugly.

But their hair is so yellow it stings my eyes.

V

It still baffles me when I shrink in acquiescence among whiteness.
Something about how they carry their body parts--arms and legs and chests
are in places they decided--sends pheromones
of predator to prey, ready to pounce, high on yellow fever.
Museum visits become self-defense sessions,
especially when they don't see my body--parts in awkward places no one decided--
in front of African artifacts and slide pass my invisibility with suave,
claiming the whole display case to themselves
with entire torsos covering cultural pieces.
Like a natural.

VI

I wonder if they'd ever sat in a room
full of China, where they didn't see blonde hair, blue eyes, white skin
but black hair, black eyes, yellow skin
didn't hear fluent English but screams and rumbles of mixed dialects
didn't own the chairs they sit on, arms and legs taking up s p a c e they never claimed,
didn't have bland salmon and broccoli or mac n' cheese or wings n' burgers.
I wonder if they'd ever feel an overwhelming presence
of yellowness--borderline claustrophobic.
Because I do. I always do.
The amount of white suffocates shrinks slices into yellow,
bleaching us.

VII

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