

P H Ở

By: Lien-Huong Nguyen

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**motherland slipped
through my fingers.**

in the numbing winter cold
my fingers burn against the bowl
smoke tendrils trace into my skin
all the languages i've lost
the heavy scent intoxicates and i
scald my tongue on the broth.

take for granted my father's patience
when he turns the page and says *again*
mimic phonetics, count to ten just to
clash with the lilt of his resign
taste my syllables catch over *một hai ba*¹
undeserved mourning for the life
we left behind.

practice this grief until it lingers
pretend i have the right to miss
dialects i never spoke, motherland
slipped through my fingers.
when the too-rich flavor
floods your throat and stings your eyes
does it feel the same way
when they mispronounce your name?
*bánh phở*² falls through chopsticks
and i fall through the cracks.

¹ "one two three" in Vietnamese

² "rice noodle," used in *phở*

**undeserved
mourning for the
life we left behind.**

**does it feel the
same way when
they mispronounce
your name?**



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Cynthia Li is a senior studying Studio Art and minoring in BEMT. When she's not holed up in her studio, you can find her playing Civ for hours, hunting Pokemon in card shops or being Max Verstappen's biggest fan.