

## Deeper than a Thousand Years

After mom's brain tumor, then the fall, blood dried dark red, eleven stitches in her head, after dad's double by-pass surgery, breastbone stapled into a seven-inch scar of life's unrelenting river—they unpack moving boxes as if the river depended upon it.

She shelves Tupperware, pots, pans and rolling pins, he unpacks her dog statue figurines into the dining room hutch, next to broken pieces of white bone China horses, Cloisonne bowls, a Delft plate, Matryoshka dolls, a Morton salt mug—sometimes he stops to remember, sometimes he stops to forget.

The kitchen is an islet, far from familiar shore—he yells from the pantry, *where is the pí dàn?* (his favorite thousand-year-old duck eggs preserved for years in clay and salt)— after

a makeshift lunch, we find boxes of airmail letters, my mom translates her father, my dad translates his, I find sheets of Chinese folk songs, my dad sings to me from beyond his ninety years, these deep waters; the current now faster, stronger than his limbs, yet, my parents wake every day, lower their oars into this swirling river— after

at the airport, I am missing them already, when my phone pings with a text from Dad—

*we found the pí dàn.*