

Copydaughter
After Girls by Luo Yang

I

All the gold in the world is in the grocery store.
The hills of plastic-wrapped pomelos
like a distant dream. In the drama, Ma loves a girl
beautiful enough to be fake. The worst thing
is that I am my mother's child, our organs second
-hand. The bowl of the scale tips shut against the floor
as if it's scared to show me my cost, the red arrow
never stopping. It tells me that mothers were never
meant to be reborn. I solidify into right angles, take my position
among the hanging ducks. The hooks are jewelry,
I say. I pay the bill with blood
money. My shadows painted with Ma's red lips.

II

Ma taught me our body is an arsenal
that wears children's clothes. Men helpless against the tuna-luster
of our pain. So I seize the corners of the river and pull it against me.
Skin-tight and pale as eyes. It advises me that a good daughter
doesn't eat with her mother's tombed teeth. So I balance barefoot
on our roof's clay spine, weep its sheen off toward the sky. On
the red carpet, my belly button refracts bars of sun.
My hands dim as every other fungied forest. Let them ogle
my velvet shadow, vein-blue and akimbo. My black torn lace
panties and the muscle pressing up under them. The flesh
guilty in its bareness. Ma disdains permanence,
the mountain range of our feet hemming the earth.
Shaved hair dusts my breasts like building ash.
But I want to skin myself with what I believe in.
My sleeve teething with Pacific. Monsters jawing
down to the wrist. Ma tortures herself watching TVB dramas.
Every version of her dewed pure on the screen.
Ma, I say, they hurt as much as you did. But her eyelids,
the only tattooed part of her, solidify into semicolons.

