

Beards

by Lisa Lim

Yes, I like beards. Because my Chinese father and brother grow hair like catfish whiskered men. Smooth bodies you cannot hide a single treasure in. But my mother's lover wore his long and scraggly, a shag carpet you could hide gold-plated teeth loosed from grandmother's rotting mouth. She told me to save them to make a necklace or ring one day. Worth money one day. Could barter for a new pair of shoes without duck tape. Ok grandma.

If I had a beard I could hide all the Hershey chocolate bars Uncle Tommy gave me to keep quiet about pissing in glass jars because he was too lazy to go downstairs to the bathroom and me drinking his piss like it was apple juice. Chocolate bars give nose bleeds to children, my grandmother said. I didn't care because I liked to paint my coloring books with this pretty ink from nose. I'd dip a brush in my red fountain and color lips of dull-faced dolls. Wanted their lips to look red candy apples I could rip from page and eat.

One day my mother's lover shaved his beard and legs. Said he couldn't fit into his tight jeans anymore. Hair too thick. Said my mother forgot what he looked like. I was sad the day his beard could not hide all that I wanted to treasure chest.

