

America, will you love me?

By Waeli Wang

I grew up here. I fought for you. I wore your colors.

Red, white, and blue. But you keep pushing me away. ~~America~~.

As I get older and grow stronger, I realize that I don't *really* need you any longer.

This partnership and trust that we had disintegrates into the spacious skies and amber waves of grain that you promised. Empty promises.

The ~~American~~ Dream that my parents had when they came to you.

Built a house on property that didn't belong to them or to you. You stole that land. And they bought it from you.

Always asking for us to buy things from you.

We keep building your damn country when you keep taking from us. Take our culture, take our food, take our lives. What about *making* something together? What about making all of us better?

My parents came here to give us better opportunities. Give us better lives. Is *this* what you call better?

You pick apart our heritage for the things you "like" and then tell us to go back to where we came from. Perpetual foreigner. Go back. Go back. Go back.

My parents spent 25 years and counting learning your language, assimilating to your standards. Differences are not of value to you but an inconvenience.

Mom, I'm sorry for always correcting your English. I thought I was being helpful but instead, I was only pointing out the fact that you weren't from here. That you didn't belong here.

Made you feel less than. I didn't mean to.

~~America~~, am I not Asian enough for you? Am I not ~~American~~ enough for you? What do you want from me? To fit into the stereotypes that have been constructed for me?

Don't strip away my identity just because you don't understand me. I'm not a blank slate that you can paint your preconceived misperceptions onto me.

There is this fury that burns deep inside of me. An anger that can only be reconciled by... what?

An apology?

~~America~~, what can I do so you will love me?

Waeli Wang is a choreographer, filmmaker, and dance educator in her second year of a Dance MFA at University of California, Irvine, scheduled to graduate in June 2019. Her thesis combination of research paper and performance is autoethnographic, exploring “Asian-ness” in America, with all the history of bias and outsider status involved. This poem was composed as an exploration of storytelling and experience that contributes to her research.