



# White Rice Paddy

Grace Huang

In the looming and graying pines, icy needles dripping from woody fingers, there is  
a clearing—

extended cellulose bulbs, swollen and arthritic, point waywardly at  
a sinuous field of yet-ripened golden green rice.

Curves maternal, rivers flow clear and cup soft lops of land  
delicately, cradling young black earth with a tenuous touch.

Fatherly reeds rise strong and steady into the sky, arch dripping with starchy grain—

but even our parents' farm-weathered hands cannot foster life in the cold.

Sieved confectionary snow will dust the crop, white, feathery, and frigid,  
building slowly onto rich, dark soil, packing water into ice shrapnel,  
turning on our own roots and piercing.

Spiraling paddies spanning two hundred meters, planes pushing thirty-three thousand  
feet, skyward and overseas.

Altitude does not keep us, wet with mud, from dropping leaves, losing yield, uprooting, and  
freezing.

Snow and plane and browning golden grain,  
stares and family and a child's mispronounced name,

through the clearing in the looming and graying pines. 