



Josalyn Huynh

Partly Spectacular

I am girls on grass lawns lacing friendship bracelets from ambiguous dreams. I am Shakespeare performing Romeo and Juliet to himself. I am finding windows in my closet and pretending to understand punk rock. I am #freelove and #stopasianhate when really I am laying in bed wondering if anyone hates me more than myself. I am only sometimes a god. I am not understanding I was a girl first. Once I told a kid to kiss his fingers and rub them on his head three times and he stopped crying.

I am my mother crying when she read my poem. I am pretending that my poem was not about her. Sometimes I pretend I am Ocean Vuong looking in the mirror for the last time. I am Ocean Vuong if I could label this emptiness between my fingers. I am Ocean Vuong if I noticed my body a little more. I am Ocean Vuong if I was actually Vietnamese. Racially Teochew, ethnically Vietnamese, nationally American, I am a triple threat in every way that doesn't count.

I am American in the same way I am conventional. I am American in the same way my mother is Vietnamese. I am American in the same way I am Vietnamese in the same way I am Teochew. I am figuring out being alive is not enough. My grandmother died the day after she remembered who I was. I am trying to find myself in a crowded street. Maybe the street is the summer I spent in New York. I am a mind reader, change breeder, magic conjurer. Tell me my

words don't conjure magic and I'll convince you you're right. I am mirrors, monuments, a monster. Phenomenally so.

I am every teenage girl looking in the mirror and smiling. I am analyzing mirrors, again. I am analyzing this body, again. I am analyzing existing again. I am only half my depression: the other half is quite the show. I am fighting my depression with a dull knife and I am winning. Sometimes, I discover me again, but she is short lived.

I am holding my girlhood and she is a red door. I am asking my mother to turn off the stove, like we weren't fire in disguise. I am a loose shirt, the tchotchkes on your counter, the top button of your favorite blouse, and that's ok. I am only kind of Vietnamese and partly spectacular. I am not believing in my existence before my liberation. If I am a god, then dear god, let them know I was only ever a liar sitting cross-legged in my suit and that's enough. I think I am enough.

Josalyn Huynh is a poet in high school. You can often find her roller-skating in the park while listening to punk rock or with a book in her hands.