



by
Kitty
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“It’s just a pop-up.”

the 大班 / Daai⁶ Baan¹ waitress pokes the X on his
phone screen

table for one
the Cantonese grandpa
sits in his regular booth
on Main and Keefer
watches videos on his phone
no earbuds, loud

his eyebrows sprout white whiskers
furrow

“有咩意思? / Jau⁵ me¹ ji³ si¹?”
he gruffs as the waitress fills his tea

“Why don’t you use YouTube instead?
There’s way more stuff there.”

black ponytail
baby blue dress shirt
she leans jade bracelet
over booth ledge

he hovers over milk tea, beefsteak, bok choy, and
rice sandcastled into a neat dome

white hair wisps
wander out from toque
layers on layers of sweater vest cardigan puffy jacket
dress pants tucked into rain boots
his umbrella
doubling as a cane
rests nearby

she gives a brief tutorial before the next customer’s
“埋單。 / Maai⁴ daan¹.”

after tea and Tube
he leaves his napkin rumpled
sticking up from his mug
like a bouquet of white flame

lucky cats wave from the kitchen window
stationed at the border between
cushioned booths and stainless steel

cue the Fairchild TV jingle
refreshed with 808s and autotune
newscasters bark monologues

“你想睇咩 video? / Ngei⁵ soeng² tai² me¹ video?”

“乜都得。 / Mat¹ dou¹ dak¹.”

“揸吓呢度。 / Gam⁶ haak³ ne¹ dou⁶.”

“咁容易? / Gam³ jung⁴ ji⁶?”

“係, YouTube 幾方便, 幾容易。 / Hai⁶, YouTube gei²
fong¹ bin⁶, gei² jung⁴ ji⁶.”

in another café, down Main
newer, trendier, whiter
a Cantonese granny
hogs the wifi
no earbuds, loud

cue the 90's Cantopop
greatest hits
Leslie Cheung croons to the succulents

Spongebob-flower-patterned jacket
matching purse
her dark hair
erupts red in the sun

nurses a free cup of *boiled* water
because she doesn't trust regular tap

sits (for hours)

nobody says a word



2 Interior of Hong Kong Café
City of Vancouver Archives
AM1523-S6-F40-: 2008-010.1884



3 Neon sign at Hong Kong Café
City of Vancouver Archives
AM1523-S6-F74-: 2008-010.0528



Kitty Cheung (she/她) is a Cantonese Canadian writer living and creating on unceded Katzie, Tsawwassen, Stó:lō, W̱SÁNEĆ, and Kwantlen land. Her work explores themes of cultural identity, immigrant family dynamics, and belonging within the Asian diaspora. Her writing has been published in SAD Mag, Ricepaper Magazine, and Best Canadian Poetry. She has trained in writing cohorts such as Arts Club's LEAP, the frank theatre company's Telling It Bent, and Centre A's Arts Writing Mentorship. Kitty has also performed poetry at the IGNITE! Youth Arts Festival, Under the Table, and APTPOP Poetry Floodlight. She completed her studies in Interactive Arts & Technology and World Literature at Simon Fraser University. Kitty finds solace in zebra pens and drag shows. Follow her work on Instagram @kitscatastrophe.