

Whenever I return to this work, I find myself slipping back into the voice of my 16-year-old self (or maybe this voice is an ageless one). The work is a gathering-making-destroying. There is obviously no true and easy way to think about the funerary anguish of grieving motherhood that comes in waves and goes in the manner bitter medicine is swallowed, a tongue left wondering in its warm discomfort.

The audio is densely packed with funerary chants that ease through the voices I grew up with, extracted from hundreds of home videos of my baby self, excited parents beckoning with outstretched arms, and a piano piece played from memory. It sounds like a silhouette sifting in and out of focus. Towards the end, my mother shouts bye-bye! from a video where she waves to my father who is swimming in a river, and immediately after it is a climactic blur of dissonant and hesitant piano, a monk chanting away, and my 3-year-old self throwing a tantrum.

The 200 litres of ginger tea fill the air with a spicy humidity. There is nothing to me quite like ginger tea, in the horrifying warm and slow burn it trails down the throat. I actually detest drinking ginger tea. My family drank it day and night when my mother was terminally ill, putting chunks of it into everyday food and drink. It was so unbearable that now I still find myself drinking the little cup of doom all the time, and while I truly do not know how much ginger tea I have drunk in my entire life, I know that the tea in the tank is a slow, simmered broth, sealed in with a layer of ginger oil.

The ginger tea embraces the sound and the footage, spliced and layered and blurred into each other, of scattered childhood videos and of a tiny burning fire that sustains grief even after 6 years. These are the ghosts of all the things I do not know how to say, and the things that have been said, spilled and contained in a glowing, whirling tank. The fire atop the tank is 3000 pieces of joss paper, folded into ingots and burnt in a massive cage burner.

This is a prolonged, demanded labour of love that finds itself ceasing to be. It is all my 16-year-old self yelling bloody murder into the void that is her own head, critiquing and comforting a child that is no more. Maybe the most pertinent question I ask is whose voice is in it, and if there is one at all, and if there needs to be one at all, of a past self tracing its footsteps far into my grief.

peeling away my walls which come apart too easily! like cabbage leaves, kimchi, the paper over ginger 紙包雞 ashes to the ground.

your eyes are closed, fogged, white, dancing with the clouds, seeping into my skull, glassy. i'm not sure why it is monotone, waking up at night.

you're starting to become stranger, a stranger to me, a perpetual reducing context. no longer caught under the slick of the same clear blue sky. there is familiarity in the wet asphalt i tread on, in the slivers of disappearing reds you've left for me on bus platforms, haphazard marbles, spiciness only in the wake of my sleepy eyes.

i wish these little gold blessings fly to you in another reality.

i have already fallen into routine. when i breathe out of drowning in ginger, it only comes in gasps. i am temporary just like how you are temporary. when i live tomorrow, i wonder if you even know that i am living. i think i am susceptible to water damage too. i lost part of the sea that day.

every night i drink mouthfuls of grit... holding in my mouth like water. remember me? everything turning whiter? even my visions of you, turning from idle time in a tank to the thousand miles in between. is this how you leave? four walls peeling, mould stuck to the grime, sticky and spicy, all askew, like you'd left in a hurry. whenever you come back, i always dream in full colour.