

Oklahoma r e v i e w

Volume 7 | Issue 1 | Spring 2006

stealing kimchi

by Jenny Yang Cropp

fake flowers in vases plastic and silk
scented red pepper green onion
garlic and soy reminiscent
of my mother's kitchen transient
except for the smell

my brother and i sit at a table quiet
remember stealing kimchi
from the fridge he the crunchy parts
me the soggy greens
how the spice would linger in our hair

one summer with our mother
i was seven he was five
and then a void of senses after

we later learned the names the things
she did not have time to teach us
dwaeji bulgogi with sticky rice
doenjang and baech'u kimchi
wrapped in lettuce leaves

sukju namul kimbap mandu
approximations of words
objects we now know
by sight and smell and taste

but food we can eat with long pauses
heat sweat beading on foreheads
our child white hands lifting chopsticks
slow so the smells will follow

and for a few hours tonight
they can be real the stolen moments
we thought had passed from existence