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## On Meeting My Biological Father

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Pleiades: Literature in Context, Volume 40, Issue 2, Summer 2020, pp.  
124-125 (Article)

Published by University of Central Missouri, Department of English  
and Philosophy

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/plc.2020.0084>



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<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/759323>

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## Sarah Audsley

### On Meeting My Biological Father

Mostly, I don't think about him at all  
as I go about my day, hanging laundry to dry,  
brushing teeth, making tea, and somehow,  
he never appears in dreams, and perhaps,  
I do feel a bit guilty about the lack  
of his presence, how it doesn't take up  
space in my subconscious, and then I need  
to remind myself that it happened at all,  
that afterward, at a pork hibachi restaurant,  
on some street I cannot name, in Korea, a server  
frets over the meat, uses scissors to cut up  
strips, flipping them as the juices sizzle & slip  
down onto the coals in front of us, and he teaches  
me to use my chopsticks, folding the hot strips  
in lettuce with sliced green onions,  
freshly pressed tofu, radishes.

With this stranger I've just met, I sit  
on the floor, share this meal. Gestures,  
a smile here and there, is what I can say.  
I don't remember the quality of the light  
only that he said he didn't take  
my mother to the hospital—it was  
because of family debt, a cloud  
hanging over him—so she died  
and he was left with me—small &  
screeching, with no milk, no bottle,  
formula, so expensive. What to do?  
When did he realize  
he couldn't care?

Again, I try to remember what  
it was like in the orphanage,  
in a country where I've never lived,  
in a foreign tongue. He holds  
my hand, strokes the back of it, says,

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how good it is to see I am grown,  
I even resemble my mother, says he's  
happy, asks if I'm happy, too?

