

Yellow

by Morgan Beard

I refuse your jaundice slurs.
I refuse your criticisms on my driving,
 a joke so old it molds and is beginning to sprout hairs.
I won't let you brush off my culture like the dirt that clings to your shoes.
 The dirt you bring into your home, I refuse it.
I refuse your mockery,
 the way you are too preoccupied with pulling your own eyes shut
 to see the enviable almond shape of mine.

You suppress the Japanese parts of me to be fitted and shaped
until you are more comfortable with the way I look ...
 with the way I speak
 with the way I eat
 with the way I smell.
"You smell like soy sauce."
 It runs deep through my veins.

This letter to you I write while admiring the gifts my mother passed
 along to me—
I claim the high cheekbones structured around my smile;
I claim the gold beads threaded through my skin and bones;
I claim the broken languages lavished upon my life
 spoken over bowls of rice,
 plates of deep fried vegetables,
 and several pints of beer.