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Yellow, the Color

Connie Shen

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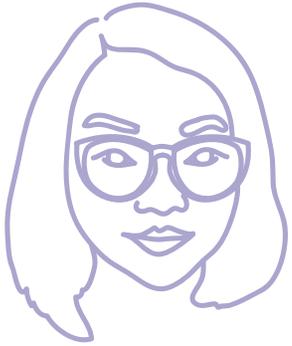
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Connie Shen | Poetry Editor

Connie Shen is a twenty-year-old Japanese Chinese American woman who spent her childhood experimenting with the power of words. She likes cereal, Greek mythology, and nice socks. In the future, she hopes to open a feminist book/record store and take more walks. Her friend once described her as a “pretty peach pastry,” which she thought was really nice. Next year, she will take over the position of Assistant Editor for *The Anthology*.

Yellow, the Color

Yellow, the color of
ignorant, fat bees drinking nectar to get drunk
dancing circles around the dizzying yellow sun
stinging red-faced, tight-lipped business men
on their pinstriped, pillowed skin
that reeks of sadness.

Yellow, the color of
purloined letters that escaped their owner’s pocket,
read aloud at slumber parties by middle school girls
dressed in yellow training bras and panties
that they proudly show each other,
a sign of womanhood.

Yellow, the color of
the stoplight that mediates between red and green,
the hesitation between yes and no,
the color of both dusk and dawn

Yellow, the color
of my people (or so they tell me)
the color of Orientalism,
the color of questions like,
“where are you FROM?”
“do you eat dogs?”
“how are you so pretty for an Asian girl?”

Yellow is not the color of my grandmother’s
Japan, the sky unfurling into a mushroom cloud over her
elementary school, swallowing up the city.
it is not the color of the fields of rice we harvest, and it is not
the color of the characters I use to write my best friend’s name.
it is not the color of the subway lines or the cherry blossom trees,
the solemn temples or the brooding mountains,
and it is not the color of the fat tears that fell
from my grandmother’s face when I told her
I still remembered everything.