



Passports

Having arrived at
the celestial kingdom, I
Refuse to enter.

Even now they live on wet boards
in Aberdeen, once nameless,
unCeltic, an inlet of water
safer than shore. Lured to land
sons and daughters forget the east wind
and the north. Somewhere, grandfather
had passed through, looking for Nanyang.
A woman of my family waited
for the patched junk sails to fill.

I am walking backwards into China
where everyone looks like me
and no one is astonished my passport
declares I am foreign, only envious
at my good luck. Speechless, without
a mind of China, I remember
grandfather's hands, grandma's tears.
On Causeway Bay, a hundred thousand
cousins walk beside me, ten hundred
thousand brothers and sisters.

SHIRLEY GEOK-LIN LIM