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Kung Yee Fat Choy
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KUNG YEE FAT CHOY

1.

"Kung Yee Fat Choy! Kung Yee Fat Choy!" Mr. Lee screams from beneath hospital sheets, "Happy New Year!"

"Not yet," I correct.

"Almost, Mr. Fong! Almost!" Lee pleads. "Only 3 hours more. Then, the Year of the Dragon!"

Sure. 3 hours from them carving another year in my marble. Years link up like a cord of pork loin sausage swinging behind storefront glass. Outside, in twilight Chinatown, gunpowder thunders its execution of the dying year.

It's about time for that stainless steel bedpan when I consider my lungs. I'm waiting for cold, probing metal to bleed cherry blossoms from me. I've become a harvest of flowers, for doctors.

2.

At 8 a.m. my gurney comes. I roll towards a tunnel, past doors with tiny windows. Taking a ride. Silk palms sway from planters filled with filters. Smells menthol. I cry from Dragon eyes.

How many seconds could just one more bone-white cigarette extract?

Inside the tunnel, emergency keyboards static. I'm heading for something beyond pure chainsaw. Then the wheels stop. I squirm on the gurney. A nurse stands in the open doorway, a nicotine halo circling her head.