

IN MEMORIAM

Y-Dang Troeung (張依蘭) (ទុរៀងត្រឹង)
(1980–2022)

Christopher B. Patterson (and the still-surviving chorus)



I am writing this memoriam fifty-three days after the death of my wife, my partner, my soulmate, my editor, my collaborator, and my co-parent, Y-Dang Troeung. It is four days after the forty-ninth day, when we buried Y-Dang's ashes in Vancouver's Mountain View Cemetery with a gravestone that marks both our names. It is thirteen days since her forty-third birthday, a day we celebrated by eating her favorite dim sum: har gao, chaozhou fun guo, and siu mai.

Since Y-Dang's death, fifty-three days have crested and fifty-three days have fallen. During these fifty-three days, I have read hundreds of letters from students, colleagues, friends, family, and distant admirers, who have all expressed their deep love for Y-Dang and have detailed the many imprints that she made upon their lives. Y-Dang did not die alone, nor do we grieve alone, or in the same ways. I knew Y-Dang perhaps better than anyone, yet there were sides to her that she revealed more to others, which too have offered meaning to her death. I have come to accept that Y-Dang will survive differently in others' memories than in my own. In turn, I have structured this memoriam to include the voices of the grieving many, who make a chorus of the surviving still; they who knew her for the many roles she, wittingly and lovingly, played for them, and for me.

Danielle Wong

"When we met at the 2014 Association for Asian American Studies conference in San Francisco, it felt like I was meeting a celebrity. This beloved student of Don's, who, as he had told me many times, had taught him so much. She represented for me the promise of community. Y-Dang's voice is unmistakable. Exact. Honest. And disciplined in its complexity. I realized that this is what care in scholarship looks like: care for the reader, care for the histories in the work, care for the people for whom she writes. To be as fiercely committed as Y-Dang was to the knowledge and lives of the communities for which she wrote is incredibly rare. Such a commitment will surely guide all of us who knew her into whatever we endeavor. And if you spent time with Y-Dang, you know this. When you've been in her presence, been held by her kindness and her drive, anything feels possible."

Like Danielle, I met Y-Dang at a conference in 2014. It was Hong Kong in June, and the conference, "Fashion in Fiction," was one she had helped organize. Y-Dang and I often described how we met in speculative terms: as cosmic, as two destined souls encountering each other after a thousand years apart, as two ancient species who, until that moment, had believed that we were the last of

our kind. And Y-Dang's story felt like a tall tale. Where my life had its challenges of abuse, dogmatic faith, racism, and the constancy of alcohol and drugs, hers was a story of genocide, of being born in a refugee camp, of immense poverty, and of the racisms and hardships of small-town Canada. And yet, neither of us saw our lives as tragedies. We loved life, were happy to have survived as long as we had, and were ecstatic to be working as Assistant Professors in Asia, despite the fact that both of us had been discouraged from taking our jobs because, as we were told, "no university in North America will ever want to hire you again." What others saw as failures, we saw as opportunities. Neither of us were supposed to be here—in academia, in Asia, on this planet. We were viruses that had slipped our way into the academic system, and we had no interest in feeding its most vital organs. Our work, our collaborations, our love, would always reflect this.

Shirley Geok-lin Lim
 "Those whom the gods...
 (For Y-Dang)
 In the shadow of Death's news,
 Stricken wordless, falling prey
 To the monsters of English
 Cliches, dumb-founded, as to
 Dive into a blank absence,
 forty plus years dropped into
 infinite time, I am tasked
 for a tribute, a piece, perhaps,
 On her past and passing.
 How to brighten the warrior
 Woman-child of a U.S. war,
 Palms closed, fingers scattling
 Salvage and salvation in
 This infinite human silence?"

Through Y-Dang, I met many scholars and writers who would become our shared mentors: Shirley Geok-lin Lim, Christopher Lee, Christine Kim, John Erni, Madeleine Thien, David Chariandy, and many others. Y-Dang was never intimidated to meet scholars or writers, no matter how big their reputation or their heads. Our most treasured mentor was her supervisor, Donald Goellnicht, who was present on the night we met, and who joined us on many conferences and trips in China, Japan, Taiwan, Canada, and the United States. We were a queer nomadic family, roping-in newfound siblings at every conference. Although Y-Dang and Don had attended many of the same conferences that I had—especially within the Asian American Studies orbit—before 2014, I had never met them, never heard

of them, never seen the joyful crowds who followed them. As I would learn, this was because my experience in Asian American Studies was notably different from theirs. Though I had felt, as a Filipino-American creative academic, that I stood on the margins of Asian American Studies, I realized that there were thousands of other scholars whose works were repeatedly cast away from the field, meant to remain only on its provincial outskirts.

Living in Asia with Y-Dang and our nomadic outcasts, I came to understand that their feelings of rejection from the field of Asian American Studies was, like our lives, no tragedy to be mourned. We observed Asian American Studies from a distance, seeing the field's methods and ideas ripple out to us, only to be interpreted, critiqued, and remade at conferences in South Korea, The Philippines, Taiwan, and Mainland China. From our purview in Hong Kong and eventually in Canada, we were able to envision a particular form of transpacific studies, what Christine Kim, Helen Hok-Sze Leung, and others liked to call "the Minor Transpacific," a term used to organize workshops and conferences outside of the dominant discourses within America or China, a project of transnational solidarity we built together, month after month.

Vinh Nguyen

"Y-Dang was the first person to do Critical Refugee Studies in Canada. Her book, *Refugee Lifeworlds*, was the first book on Southeast Asian diasporic culture ever published in Canada. And her forthcoming memoir, *Landbridge*, will be the first memoir by a Cambodian Canadian writer. She broke a lot of ground with her work. Her life, and her beautiful acts of storytelling, will remain with us for years to come. And her life force will be felt in the many books that will be published in her wake. Including my own."

It is difficult for me to give an overview of Y-Dang's scholarship. This is because the week we met, I read through all of Y-Dang's publications, and with every insight gleaned, every phrase turned to the next elegant clause, I fell more and more in love with her, more intimidated by her quiet genius. Our love, and our seduction, often came through words.

Y-Dang's first publication was in *Canadian Literature*, entitled "Forgetting loss in Madeleine Thien's *Certainty*." The modest title invited the reader into an urgent questioning of, as Y-Dang wrote, the "value of continually returning to a traumatic past" (91). She argued that "the impetus to keep certain wounds open and alive in the public sphere—to keep our gazes focused on a difficult past in

order to combat historical erasure—must be tempered by a consideration of the psychic and material costs of such acts.” As a refugee scholar, Y-Dang knew well the private costs of public disclosure, of feeling the pressure to “keep certain wounds open and alive.” Madeleine Thien’s *Certainty*, a novel about the familial memory of the Japanese occupation of Borneo, provided a means for Y-Dang to consider her own role as a refugee scholar, without the need for disclosure.

Many know the trials of scholarly life for marginalized people, of the ways academia can offer status and belonging, only to slowly extract one’s difference, and to exploit one’s emotional and psychic life. But Y-Dang was not any marginalized scholar. Her very name invoked the refugee camp she was born in, camp Khao-I-Dang. Before she had turned one-year-old, her face was already featured in newspapers littered all across Canada. Before she had a chance to speak, she had already posed in photos with the then Prime Minister, Pierre Trudeau. Before she had ever held a pen, her hands had been captured on national television, holding a Canadian flag.

Y-Dang’s first publication wouldn’t be the last time that she turned to artwork to express her own discontent, as well as her own joys, in inhabiting the roles given to her. She would return to this method in many publications, in *Modern Fiction Studies*, “‘A Gift or a Theft Depends on Who Is Holding the Pen’: Postcolonial Collaborative Autobiography and Monique Truong’s *The Book of Salt*,” and in *University of Toronto Quarterly*, “Witnessing Cambodia’s Disappeared” (2013). In both, Y-Dang continued to use literary works to express her own experiences as a refugee scholar, while at the same time, she became more and more devoted to understanding Cambodian history and refugee peoples. This latter thread would be woven in all her work, but would be most clear in her next set of articles, all published in 2015, in *Rethinking History*, “Human Rights and the Literary Self-Portrait: Vann Nath’s *A Cambodian Prison Portrait: One Year in the Khmer Rouge’s S-21*”; in *Melus: Multi-Ethnic Literatures of the United States*, “Iterations of War and its Literary Counterforces: Vaddey Ratner’s *In the Shadow of the Banyan* and Kosal Khiev’s *Why I Write*”; and in *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature*, “Buried History and Transpacific Pedagogy: Teaching the Vietnamese Boat People’s Hong Kong Passage.” In all these publications, Y-Dang found ways to understand her own experiences as a refugee and academic as personal moments within a dynamic zone of survival, or as she would come to call it, as a part of “refugee lifeworlds.”

Anida Yoeu Ali

“I can’t stop crying. My dear sister, oun srey, may you rest in eternal peace and power.”

Throughout her bursts of writing and research, Y-Dang repeatedly visited Phnom Penh, inhabiting cafes, galleries, cultural centres, museums, and bars, and making community with many artists, workers, and other refugees (many of whom had been deported from their home countries). On our first trip to Cambodia together, in 2014, we sat in the courtroom of The Extraordinary Courts in the Chambers of Cambodia (ECCC) tribunal, where we heard the historic verdicts of Nuon Chea, second-in-command to Pol Pot, and Khieu Samphan, Cambodia's head of state during the Khmer Rouge. Over the years, we made numerous research trips to The Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam), Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum, and Bophana Audiovisual Center, where Y-Dang helped host events and organize an exhibit. Eventually, Y-Dang rented an apartment in the historic BKK1 neighborhood, and used it as a hub to conduct research, to visit her cousins and extended family, to bring students to Seim Reap, and to connect with artists such as Kosal Khiev, Anida Yoeu Ali, and Rithy Panh.

In 2015, Y-Dang's book manuscript about Cambodian history and art, which she had been working on since graduate school, went successfully through two rounds of review, but was refused at the Editorial Board level. In their rationale, the Board wrote that the book's subjects were too minor, and represented an "intellectual myopia," a "silo." Most devastating was their response that Y-Dang, as an author, could not claim to be an expert on the subject matter—that is, her own history, and that her book "seemed to care more about art than life." Written anonymously, the Board's responses seemed to presume that Cambodian history and refugee art was not a broad enough subject for a book, and that Y-Dang was too distant from the subject to fully comprehend the violence of the Cambodian genocide—a genocide that (because it apparently *must* be said) resulted in the death of over half of her family. She would not return to the book for years, but she returned to Cambodia consistently, sometimes monthly, and sometimes she would stay for weeks. Often, she brought students, colleagues, and myself with her. But she often went alone, treasuring the peace of her small studio apartment.

Olivia Lim

"As her research assistant, I had a front row seat to her talent as a scholar, her creativity, her decisiveness, and her fundamental sense of responsibility that was woven into her work. In many ways, I feel that I am just coming to realize how much Y-Dang taught me. Perhaps it is because so many of her lessons were not just spoken out loud, but embodied in who she was as a teacher, a mentor, and a friend. The possibility of uncovering more of these lessons in the years to come fills me with gratitude for all

the ways she is still with us. When I write, I can hear her voice, and memories of her come flooding back. Her wisdom and reassurance still continue to guide me, an extension of the time she so graciously shared over the years. In one moment, she reminds me of what it means to practice community engaged scholarship, of what it means to bring the personal so fully and unabashedly into academic work. In another, she gently but firmly reminds me that *no one sentence should be burdened with that many clauses*. These memories are what make the pain of loss all the more heartbreaking. But I also imagine they will be what sustains me in the months and years to come.”

Sparks flew in all directions when Y-Dang and I met, and one of them fused insights that would become our shared work. I had never co-written an article before I met Y-Dang, but her flexibility as a thinker was an open invitation to think with her, to take our thoughts to higher ground where we could understand our previous work, our previous assumptions, in the clarity through which her mind worked. Over the course of our love, we officially co-wrote three articles together, and invisibly co-wrote much more. Often ideas came in transit, while on airplanes, subways, busses, or ferries, when the open road, the open ocean, gave room for our ideas to roam.

Our first collaboration was actually published last, “Asian Literatures in English,” which we co-wrote with Shirley Geok-lin Lim and Weihsin Gui (2020). The essay, which we began in 2014, places Asian literatures in English in conversation with Asian American and Asian Canadian literatures, not to compare them but to understand them from a transpacific purview—that is, to ask what new questions these texts direct us to when we read them together. Y-Dang’s concerns in pushing the capacities of Asian American Studies were clear in her contribution: that the questions these texts generate together allow us to attend to the multiple and ongoing legacies of war and genocide, and to account for “new waves of refugees and migrants from West Asian countries such as Afghanistan, Syria, and Iraq” (801).

Our other co-written articles brought together our shared love for living in Hong Kong, a space that many in North America seemed to dismiss as chaotic, uber-capitalist, politically regressive, or merely dirty. For us, Hong Kong was a space of romance, creativity, art, and dynamism. Most of all, as we saw in the activities of the Occupy movements in 2014, Hong Kong represented a new and evolving form of revolt. Our first article about Hong Kong was in *Concentric*, “The Psyche of Neoliberal Multiculturalism: Queering Memory and

Reproduction in Larissa Lai's *Salt Fish Girl* and Chang-rae Lee's *On Such a Full Sea* (2016). Our argument was that "Asian diasporic speculative texts...re-invest racial identities by focusing less on the authentic Asian American subject, and more on the traumatic violence, exploitation and structures of power that cross racial, ethnic, and national boundaries" (75). Our activities with students during and after the Occupy movements gave urgency to this argument. In Hong Kong, seeing ourselves as Asian Canadian or as Asian American felt constraining. Though our identities and audiences were, in my case, Filipino American, or in her case, Cambodian Canadian, we were also both mixed Chinese, and had learned to love and explore our various ancestries. We read literature to read ourselves, and found a transpacific sensibility, one that allowed us to envision and define our roles as educators in a time of political upheaval.

Our last publication together, in *Amerasia*, "Organic and Inorganic Chinas: Desire and Fatigue in Global Hong Kong" (2020), cast a foreboding gaze onto the ways Western academics had typified Hong Kong within a binary against Mainland China. We argued that discourses about these "two Chinas" "reconstitut[ed] Chineseness as either 'inorganic' (signifying one-party rule and social/cultural engineering) or as 'organic' (signifying cultural hybridity and laissez-faire capitalism)," (281). As an alternative, we sought to emphasize the transnational political solidarities across these Chinas as well as other Asian and non-Asian spaces, proliferating Chineseness through its many understated political realities.

In our last essay together, we invoked the term "global fatigue" which articulates "not a desire for the global, but a disillusionment with its liberating myths" (281). This fatigue, too, reflected the state of our lives. In 2015, Y-Dang won a significant teaching award (a Teaching Excellence Award), and was said to be the youngest person ever at her university to win it. Just as her face had been peppered on newspapers across Canada in 1980, in 2015, her smile could be found on Hong Kong subways, in malls, on discarded pamphlets, and on websites. This was the same year that the Editorial Board rejected her book, keeping her and her ideas indefinitely gatekept out of North American academia. Privately, Y-Dang was devastated. Publicly, she was urged to smile for her university peers. Then, in 2016, under enormous pressure, her department Chair encouraged her to apply for tenure early. He told her that she would be a guaranteed pass, considering how much her academic star had risen. For a year she halted her research to work on her application, but was denied tenure in 2017. Months later, after going through a very difficult birth with our son (who was found to have many health "complexities"), Y-Dang attended a departmental meeting, and was publicly humiliated for not answering emails or serving on committees during her ten-week maternity leave.

In Hong Kong, we had learned to be excited rather than happy, to be content without contentment, to desire without seeking fulfillment. We let anxiety spin us, like a roll top dancing on a glass table, a thrill that sometimes made us keel. And after so many hardships, our global fatigue was undeniable. Once we became parents, the whole thing felt unsustainable. Though at times we dreamed of living in Hong Kong forever, our precarious positions made it a temporary space.

Christine Kim

“As a friend, she was a person of incredible warmth and generosity. She was fun, and she was always so curious. As a colleague, she was a rarity, as someone who always showed up for the work she believed in, for the people that needed her, and for always giving more than she received back...In many ways, the special issue of *Canadian Literature* that she edited was a really good example of the deep collaborative work that Y-Dang loved to do. She worked with Cambodian artists and educators to put together one of the forums, and scholars around the world for the essays. She also worked very close with her RA Jiejun during this process, which was another kind of collaborative work that held a special place in her heart. She was an ideal collaborator. She encouraged others to show up for themselves, heard what we were trying to say, and let us know that it mattered, too.”

I wasn't Y-Dang's only collaborator. Her brief but impactful oeuvre contains many names who each show Y-Dang's willingness to work with others, and how enriching she found the collaborative process.

Y-Dang found community everywhere she went, and when it wasn't there for her, she created it herself. In July of 2018, we moved to Vancouver to become faculty members of the University of British Columbia. I had come as her spousal hire—one of the many times my career, and my writing, was made possible through her. Despite our initial hardships melding into the Canadian academic system, Y-Dang still endeavored to create a home, and to bring people in. She began weekly visits to a refugee organization, Vancouver Association of Survivors of Torture (VAST), where she played with refugee children. She was an active member of UBC's Asian Canadian and Asian Migration Studies program (ACAM), and worked with students to help organize events with visiting scholars like Omar El Akkad, and grassroots organizations like Watari. In 2020, she became a Wall Scholar at the Peter Wall Institute for Advanced Studies, and thrived in close conversations with similar-minded colleagues from depart-

ments across UBC campus. With the Wall Scholars, Y-Dang helped create the *Chromatic* anthology, an edited collection that reflects Y-Dang's turn toward more creative endeavors: it asks a philosopher to draw, a medical doctor to write poetry. In *Chromatic*, Y-Dang juxtaposes her own creative non-fiction with artwork by the East German artist Ulrike Zöllner, whose work would later be featured on the cover of *Refugee Lifeworlds*. Y-Dang would continue this trajectory of creative nonfiction in her essays "Boneyards of the Cold War" (under the penname "kid teo") and "Easter Epic," which both appeared in *Brick: a literary journal* (2021, 2022).

Y-Dang continued to find collaborators even during the COVID-19 lockdowns, when she took to virtual organizing and curated an art exhibition at Rithy Panh's Bophana Center in Phnom Penh, titled "Remembering Cambodian Border Camps, 40 Years Later." The exhibition brought together "the voices of artists, activists, and community members for a collective conversation focused on Cambodia's artistic renaissance today, with a focus on remembering the history of Cambodian border camps," especially the camp that bore Y-Dang's name, Khao-I-Dang. Unleashed into virtual space, Y-Dang collaborated with artists and writers in Vancouver, Phnom Penh, Paris, London, and Lowell. That same year, Y-Dang became an Editorial Board member of the journal *Canadian Literature*, and she immediately began to use the ideas from her art exhibition to organize a special issue, "Refugee Worldmaking: Canada and the Afterlives of the Vietnam War." Seeking to explore "refugee worldmaking" as "the reparative acts of creativity that refugees deploy to remake themselves and their worlds," Y-Dang's special issue featured scholars of the "minor transpacific," as well as Cambodian artists and curators such as Rithy Panh, Phala Chea, FONKi Yav and Rotha Mok.

Y-Dang's final collaborative act was to bring together students, performers, designers, and filmmakers to create *Easter Epic*, a short film based on a scene from her own childhood, and which she co-directed with Alejandro Yoshizawa. The film's three-day shoot took place in September 2022, only two months before Y-Dang passed. Though ill, she brought what energies and joys she had on set, and took time to chat with each of her collaborators about their lives and longings, reassuring each of them that, in a film about her own life, they too belonged.

Thy Phu

"Y-Dang's book, *Refugee Lifeworlds*, guides us on how to see the overlooked, how to listen to silences, how to pause in these gaps, how to dismantle these scripts to form new refugee narratives. It is a story she needed to tell. And it's one we need to read. She gave me a copy of this profound book, the culmination

of so many years of work, when we last met. Since we parted, I've been returning to her beautiful gift, which she bequeathed to me and to all of us. During rare moments of reflection and contemplation, wrested from the hectic chatter of daily life, I sit in my reading chair, her book in my lap, her voice in my head. In the void opened up by her passing, I find solace in the elegance of her words, the precision of her ideas, the brilliance of the worlds she bridged. It is as though she were with us still."

All of Y-Dang's collaborations and community-building made their way, if obliquely, into her academic book, which she continued to write and transform after we moved to Vancouver. The book, *Refugee Lifeworlds*, had been halted at the Editorial Board level in 2015, but not forgotten. Four years after its rejection, Y-Dang was motivated to try and publish it again after her beloved supervisor and friend, Donald Goellnicht, died suddenly in October, 2019. We were in a mall in Richmond with our son when Y-Dang received the phone call. I remember her cries, and our son's. Losing Don shocked us with a suddenness that made us realize the importance of our own work, and the little time we had left to do it. As Y-Dang wrote in a memoriam to Don, "I can still hear his gentle voice of encouragement today, all the time, urging me not to give up on my book." Soon after Don's funeral, she picked up the manuscript for *Refugee Lifeworlds*, determined to honor his death, and all the deaths of loved ones who had come before him. "All we can share now," she wrote, "is Don's work and spirit, which lives on through us."

Like all of Y-Dang's scholarship, the manuscript for *Refugee Lifeworlds* was grounded in her personal experience as a Cambodian refugee, and it was unique in using both historical archives and family anecdotes to illuminate the refugee experience. But her life had changed dramatically since 2015, and likewise, the manuscript too would need to change. During our time in Hong Kong, her book had been rejected, her tenure case failed, and her time as a mother, squeezed and shamed. Then, after a difficult birth, her time in Vancouver was met with repeated hospital visits for our son, depression, and the nascent symptoms of a growing but undetectable illness. All of this had radically changed her way of seeing and sensing Cambodian refugee life. In her book revisions, she came to rely less on methods of diaspora or (minor) transpacific studies, and more on terms like debility, aphasia, gain, and crip. Through these methods, Y-Dang found new ways to see Cambodian history, refugees, and herself, not as tragic livelihoods nor as problems to be solved, but as creators of new lives, and new worlds.

erin Khuê Ninh

"To read *Refugee Lifeworlds* is to have the synapses connect, lighting up the ways that refugee legacies, disability, and mental health have always been meant to speak to each other, but only now can. It is also to meet history anew, as Y-Dang Troeung moves across an astonishing archive of documents, moments, and texts with a close-reader's care and a storyteller's grace. This book is stunning—at once beautiful and devastating. It is the work of grieving, so that we may better regroup."

In Fall 2021, I drove Y-Dang to the emergency room, where CT scans revealed tumors throughout her gastrointestinal tract. Later biopsies revealed an aggressive, metastatic form of cancer. We fell from a bridge, with nothing to grab onto but the cold rush of air.

Y-Dang's diagnosis gave us a chance to, first of all, say "fuck off" to all the professional things that gave us shit, but also, to embrace all the things and the people who gave us joy, energy, and love. During that first hospital stay, I promised her that all my energies would go to her. "You are my only project," I told her. We made a list of things she would accomplish, and I would do my best to help. I felt that all my training as a scholar, writer, and editor, had been meant for this.

First on our list was to publish *Refugee Lifeworlds*. By then, the book had been accepted for publication a year before, but the final draft had been due seven months prior, and for seven months Y-Dang hadn't been able to finish it. I promised her that before she died, she would know what it means to publish a book, to hold it in her hands. She sent me all the files for *Refugee Lifeworlds*. I combed through the feedback, the letters from the anonymous peer reviewers, and was ready to edit. But I soon realized that the manuscript, cover to cover, was already perfect. It was stunningly innovative, continually insightful, and ground-breaking in every chapter. I felt angry, and like the doctors around us, I delivered my own queries to her in that hospital room: this book is already perfect, why not send it to the press?

Y-Dang's capacity to love and to forgive always worked in my favor. She was patient, and let me realize on my own that the reasons she hadn't sent the book out was explained in the book itself. Because *Refugee Lifeworlds* was the type of book that could never be finished. New things were always arriving, new senses of justice, new waves of refugees, new facts about Pol Pot time. And the burden of Cambodian history, as well as the communities and families she felt responsible for, were too heavy to risk getting anything wrong, even only in hindsight. So, too, the psychological burden of academia, the many

rejections Y-Dang had experienced, and the way the book reflected her life's transformations, kept her from seeing *Refugee Lifeworlds* as a finished project. Not to mention, she had a husband who published frequently, and who wrote every morning with a joyful lightness, a life-giving ritual. Being, as she said, in my ever-expanding shadow, was not easy.

We found new joys working together, in copyediting and publishing *Refugee Lifeworlds*. A book that was once a void of failure became a source of expression and enrichment. I'll never forget the day she got the blurbs from her editor, and I read them to her as she kept using paper towels to stop the tears of joy dripping down her face. Try as we might to deny it, the feeling of being valued as a scholar meant a great deal to her. She had been deprived of that feeling for too long.

Out of her own perceived failures, Y-Dang transformed her life, her work, into something greater. So too, in the salvages of her unfinished manuscripts and projects (which totaled over 200,000 words), she discovered a new book: *Landbridge*, a family memoir that brings together all the auto-theoretical leanings of her work. *Landbridge* is Y-Dang unabridged—it is her memories, her humor, her intelligence, her life. It is her last words, spoken with love and longing, and arriving in the same cold winds that once terrified us.

Madeleine Thien

"In the last week of your life we spent night after night around your bed. The doctors and nurses caring for you told us that when they entered this room they felt the presence of devotion. I know that the wellspring wasn't us. It was you. Your friendship and love made me a better person. To end this letter, Y-Dang, but not this conversation, which I know will last all my life, I send out the words you wrote to me just three months ago, and which I believe was a message to your family and to all of us who could not bear to lose you. 'I still believe,' you wrote, 'and won't give up hope that a lifetime stretches before us in body or in spirit. Thank you for everything. Love always, Y-Dang.'"

I began writing this memoriam fifty-three days after Y-Dang's death, and I finish it fifty-seven days after her death. With only four days of time to write, this work reflects the messiness of grief, the way it overlaps with mourning, with trauma, and isn't given the luxury of time. Y-Dang and I were constant collaborators. Without her to read through this piece, to sharpen its words and to reduce its excesses, this memoriam too is a display of her absence. Like Y-Dang would, I turned to the strength of community in a time of urgency. The work we create together is honest, but not flawless.

Y-Dang spent her last years building the roof over our heads that she would become. Her works, too, are part of this roof, a structure to house those who share and carry on. They are her community, her still living, still surviving chorus. Our grief has no intellectual property; our mourning comes in multitudes.

For those who spent their lives nourishing everyone around them, their streams of grief cannot be siphoned or dammed for the purposes of creating one's own, nourishing current. Y-Dang was such a person. Her memory and mourning will always pour over. The voices of the grieving come in a thousand searing cries. A rainstorm in a ravine.

To all who read this, who read her: part of her now belongs to you. Her words, her deeds, belong to all of us. When we read her work, we feel her close to us, and are comforted by her continued presence. Though we may walk forward alone, we do so without fear. We have each other, and we have Y-Dang in our hearts, always.

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