What Goes Around

Emma Wang

my mama tells me that all good people are reborn in the west

& before babies are conceived they look down on earth to choose their mother. my mama tells me that when she was my age the moon was the only thing that kept her from jumping. because it was just so beautiful. because her sin is an heirloom that she is given but not forgiven.

my mama squeezes rolls of skin in her fingers, asks me to snap away strands of graying hair.

my mama says her face is more yellow compared to mine, our whiteness a measure of our past bodies. the er doctor tells me that there is something wrong with my mama’s brain or heart, she lies on the leather sofa and cries the same tears at her baba’s funeral, because death is not sad only victorious, because time is a ladder she has tried to climb, because why would her skin be this shade of yellow if she didn’t deserve it?