

“Eat”

My mother is holding my infant son
so I can eat the mustard cabbage
she has sweetened with brown sugar.
For the starving children in China,
I have learned to eat whatever I am given.
Even mustard cabbage, which I hate.
She nods approvingly.
Now I must eat to feed
not only all the world's starving children
but my own flesh and blood,
my infant son,
who fattens daily on my milk,
my milk that trickles a thin blue stream
into his wet pink mouth.

I grow thinner.

He is sucking the living
daylights out of you,
says my mother,
and with a bamboo rice stick paddle
she slaps another helping onto my plate.