

Thang Lian

Age: 18, Grade: 12

School Name: East Kentwood High School, Kentwood, MI

Educator: Le Tran

Category: Poetry

Ka Pa (Father)

iv. Malaysia in my head
is not so loud
and bright.

The air glues
onto your skin
and the roads roar
with the revving of engines.

Mother tells me to be grateful,
but I already miss the quiet
valleys of home.

In Malaysia,
I meet Father
for the first time.

He is bulky,
his skin golden and burnt,
yet the way he laughs like a hyena
tells me he is family.

Hello, son. Welcome to Malaysia!

Father beams at me, a little nervous.

He's never met you before, Mother chimes,
Father left right before you were born.

Father reveals that in Malaysia,
everything is high-tech.

Mother and I are overwhelmed
and he laughs as we struggle
to flush the toilet.

Maybe Malaysia isn't so bad
when our family is finally complete.

The rest of our days are
spent behind a huge gate.
When they call our name,
it'll mark the coming of better days,

for the United Nations gives tickets to freedom,
or so we pray.

And so, each week, my family sits,
staring at that gate.
Each day we think,
today is the day.
Each day we leave,
thinking tomorrow might
just be the day