

## Once in a Blue moon (CO-10451)

My name is Fang Hua.

Mother used to call me "Fragrant Flower"

That was before Father left us.

Before he walked out on mother and me.

Mother is silent now.

She hardly ever smiles now.

Sometimes I wish

Father would appear in the

Hallway and lift me up

And throw me in the air.

I wish that we could be a family again

And that mother wouldn't hide

Her tears.

Five years ago, Mother promised us

That she would love us forever,

No matter what happens.

When Father left,

She broke her promise.

She smiles through gritted teeth.

She hides her bruised fingers.

And she pretends she

doesn't care about father.

Mother hides in the kitchen

Weeping, waiting for father

To return.

I, cry myself to sleep,

Almost every night,

Hoping mother will love

Me again.

Today, my cousin Li Liang

Shows me

How to do Kung Fu.

We kick, we jump, we laugh.

Sad memories are forgotten,

Yet tears still come.

My best friend in the whole world

is Mei Ling.

Long, black hair

Tall, smart, energetic.

The complete opposite of me.

My teacher yells at me

For not paying attention in class.

I get so mad, I pinch

The girl next to me.

The school bell rings.

I race home

And come across a

Acrobatic show.

I squeeze myself

Through the crowd

And see three people

Walking on a rope.

They suddenly flip over

And fall on a mattress.

Everybody claps and cheers

Making me feel so small

Among the swarm of bodies.

The sky becomes grey.

If I don't get home by 6pm,

Mother will scold me.

The house is silent.

Quiet,

Lifeless.

I go in

And find mother in bed

Eyes red,

Cheeks swollen

Holding a ring

Father once gave her.

Before Father left us,

We were so happy.

He never called me

By my real name

Instead, he called me

His *Little Princess*

He'd buy me treats

From the market

Sugary,

Sweet,

Sticky dried fruit.

He'd ride me home

On his shoulders

When the rain threatened

To drench us

But one day,

He left,

Leaving mother

Speechless.

I am at school

With Mei Ling

Eating lychee and fortune cookies.

I crack open a cookie

And read my fortune.

*You must choose the right path, if you don't, your life will change forever.*

I wonder what that meant.

Mei Ling laughs.

Suddenly my teacher comes.

*Your mother is here, Fang Hua*

She grabs the sleeve

Of my white uniform

And pulls me away.

*Where are we going?*

I ask mother

Once we get outside.

She closes her eyes.

*It's for the best*

She says.

Mother tells me the news.

I scream and start crying.

Her words are stuck in my head.

*I have to sell you as a servant.*

She slaps on my face.

My nose begins to bleed.

*I have given you a good start*

She says.

The fortune cookie was right.