

# Metamorphosis

By Jenny Xie

Nowhere in those kerosene years  
could she find a soft-headed match.

The wife crosses over an ocean, red-faced and cheerless.  
Trades the flat pad of a stethoscope for a dining hall spatula.

Life is two choices, she thinks:  
you hatch a life, or you pass through one.

Photographs of a child swaddled in layers arrive by post.  
Money doesn't, to her embarrassment.

Over time, she grows out her hair. Then she sprouts nerves.  
The wife was no fool, but neither did she wander.

She lives inside a season of thrift, which stretches on.  
Her sorrow has thickness and a certain sheen.

The wife knows to hurry when she washes.  
When she cooks, she licks spoons slowly.

Every night, she made a dish with ground pork.  
Paired with a dish that was fibrous.

Source: *Poetry* (November 2017)