

## The Girl Who Wanted to Eat The Stars

I don't know how to tell my mother that I am hungry when she has given me everything to eat.

With withered fingertips and calloused palms, she prepares a feast in my name. A mere dining room is transformed into a grand banquet. A full course buffet for me to gorge on breakfast, lunch, dinner, and even dessert. Yet, still after devouring entrees and appetizers, a tumultuous grumble continues to roar from inside of me. She tells me that I have a gaping hole for a stomach, and I don't think she's wrong. I have tried filling it over the years with all things meant to make me feel whole but settled on silent starvation because, maybe, this is how I am meant to walk through the world.

Hungry, and empty.

My mother mashes lost parts of her life and spoon feeds me the fragments of a former future. For quite some time I tried to fill the void in me, devouring the failed dreams and aspirations of a life that never belonged to me. I've chewed on desires and swallowed achievements hoping to be satiated. Yet, my insides continue to churn and rumble for something more fulfilling.

At night, disharmonious prayers echo in the place of fading gospel hymns. Foreign tongues whisper psalms into the glittering night sky promising to satiate my hunger for faith and filial piety. My family sends prayers into the sky to hope to have a daughter who knows her place, that doesn't reach too far or aim too big. So in my dreams, I reach up towards the sky and pluck down the first star in a sea of darkness, and swallowed it whole. Then came the moon, Mars, Venus, and the rest of the planets. I ate and ate until the light scorched the tips of my fingers, seared the edges of my lips, and fried me from the inside out.

I don't know how to tell my mother that I want to consume the whole world. That I am hungry for more than the moon and the stars. I don't know how to tell her because I know she just might try to give it to me, and I know that she can't. I know that as skilled as she is at making rice, and frying plantains she cannot boil the stars and feed me my dreams to make me feel whole. I know that she doesn't see me cry and ache over being hungry for the world. I know if she did, she would try to give it to me. My mother would break herself backward to feed me the whole galaxy if that meant I could be full.

I don't know how to tell my mother that I am hungry.