

## Toward a 44th Birthday · *Nellie Wong*

Mornings and the eggshells crack, the eggshells scatter to the wind. You carry them within you, the wind, and lift your feet toward construction sites and know that construction men eye women from the corners of their eyes. Silence sniffs at you like a cat and still you walk toward work, toward skyscrapers, imagine the shattering of old plate glass. You forget the Ko-Rec-Type, the carbon copies, the Xerox machines. The time clock ticks, a medallion on the wall. You dream of grinding coffee beans, relaxing in the hot sun of Egypt, forget that the pyramids are a wonder of the world. Is it another vacation you need, apple trees to sit under, the longings of a girl searching for arms, hands to link to her tiny fingers? You sigh, reading of diamonds in millionaires' teeth, of maids tidying beds for other maids, of a Luckys strikebreaker being struck by a car. No, not a car, but a driver, a human being. What life will you find in your roamings toward China, toward Asian America in its kitchen crowded with dreams, on its streets teeming with cracks, toward young men being tried for killings at the Golden Dragon, toward pioneer women of the 19th century, the pioneer women who live within your bones and the voice of Sui Sin Far nudges you awake. How far, how near will sisters talk? Will art atrophy, or will it become the tools in our hands?

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