*“Mother, you’re so Asian! You can’t even speak English! You never understand me! I’m thirteen, not a child!”*

*A thousand words of frustration shatter into a thousand more broken pieces.*

*Tense sentiments boil within my chest. Anguish bleeds through tears of sorrow. I slump to the ground, physically and emotionally drained as two trophies topple over, raining down in slow motion-- prisms of wounded glory, the fall of the tragic hero. Objects split into pieces, and I feel torn as my so-called achievements give way, reflecting the splintering snap of my soul.*

*Who am I supposed to be? Asian or American?*

*The biting reflection vexed my soul. Oh, the times of simplistic naivety, times when I was not afraid of growing up, afraid of change. In the heart of bittersweet irony, I missed the security of a mother’s affection: that shoulder to cry on, that hug to uplift me, and that presence to inspire me.*

“*Chi fan*! Dinner!” Mother hollers from downstairs, snapping me out of my reverie.

“Coming, Ma” I clamor. Dusting off the edges, I set a recent picture back in place: a 17 year old girl clutching a Chinese ink-brush stood proudly in her mother’s arms as her mother guided the glossy ink into *ping an*—peace. With an honored smile, I gaze sentimentally as I recollect the long road of my identity growth, the struggles through young days of facing rampant assimilation under society and pressures of losing touch with Asian culture. Through all this, Mother had never given up on me; through her love and faith, my childish days of confusion gradually transitioned toward maturity, rising to my current balance of self-identity as I learned to embrace this field of division into a beautiful myriad of one united entity.

As musty aromas of white rice fume toward my nose, I quickly grab the chopstick pins from my hair bun and slid out my room. Scampering downstairs, I pass through hallways filled with immigration pictures, Chinese paintings, and symbols of good luck. Turning a corner, I catch Mother sitting in dim yellow light, glasses propped against her nose, her little eyes perusing notes on *A* *Guide to* *English: The Basics.*

My lips quiver and my legs give way, pinching sentiment in my chest as I silently wail. Mother turns to look at me, her eyes enclosing compassion, sympathy, and motherly love.

“*Dui bu qi* -- Sorry for everything,” I cry.

“*Bao bei, wo ai ni* -- Mommy loves you, my baby,” she breaths, stroking my hair, humming, and rocking me gently.

Holding Mother in my arms, I think back to my past; Mother has always stayed by my side, patiently and faithfully waiting for me to find acceptance and peace within the rising world of confusion. Even with all my frustrations and rebellion, Mother, in sweet forgiveness, hung on to seeing through who I really was, never giving up hope in me or my path to finding myself. Thus, these internal struggles have opened up my eyes to imperfections of human tendencies, teaching me acceptance of the universal threshold of flawed sub-consciousness. And finally, acceptance within me has evolved these cultural mannerisms into a final embrace towards my identity.

With that, endless struggles slide away, feelings of bitterness vaporize, and sentiments of cynicism dissipate as I feel the familiar tender arms of a mother wrap around me, emitting a love that nothing else in the world could ever replace. The delicate rustling of leaves outside stirred— the song of nature’s maracas—, and beneath Mother’s warm beating chest, I heard a soft voice with the enveloping wind gently whisper, “I forgive you.”