ASIAN IN AMERICA

a symbolic exhibition and dining experience
what of me is interchangeable?
I never did ask, but you told me anyway
individualism is a majority privilege
maybe it is you who cannot taste nuance
because my memories can

“yellowtail” (lentil miso cured kanpachi)
“pork laap” (jackfruit)
“kombucha” (kombu-cha foam)
plated on faux chinoiserie
EGGS & BANANAS

cocktail one

french oak flash-aged bai jiu
fermented black bean & sichuan peppercorn syrup
oolong tea
amaro montenegro
salted whipped cream cheese
lao gan ma chili oil

Egg (noun): a white person that acts Asian
Banana (noun): an Asian person that acts white

This is an egg's cocktail take on the banana-inspired cheese tea craze.
YOU MAKE ASIAN FOOD, RIGHT?
course two (vr)

...putting it all together
I wonder if food is my way of being an individual
not just another minority
inching towards acceptance
I pipe in smoke at the last minute
curls of applewood that breeze through like a kiss
they have no deeper meaning
and you know what?
that’s okay too
is it more painful when they are true 
or false?
my mother demands
her own version of meekness from me
I remember our fights
when I buy dumplings
four to the dollar

not so spicy / Thai naem fermented shortribs
not so delicate / Japanese yam
not so greasy / Chinese pea vines
not banchan / plum with kimchi seasonings
not sesame / pressure cooked nigella seeds
not pho / bun mam
Breathe in.
The smell of charred meats and spices fill the market air.
This is my way of distilling that sensation into a drink.

**SKEWER**
*cocktail two*

- lamb fat washed brandy
- charred garlic & chili pepper
- shaoxing wine
- Kummel
- fennel syrup
- MSG ice
...the star of this dish is veal sweetbreads
I find we have much in common
it’s a lucky exception from the rule
that offals are distasteful
an aspiration for all minorities
searching for acceptance in fine dining kitchens
always reminded of its replaceability
dare it stray too far

...in the end,
being Asian American is a maze
a question about a hyphen
a contradiction
all bound tightly together in a feeling
of growing up somewhere but never belonging
Congratulations Sandra Oh
You, Jean Lee
I’ve longed to hear your stories
The narrative not brought forth
By a white knight

Andrew’s persimmon mousse
Andy’s fish sauce caramel ice cream
Rick’s chapulines cake with mole sugar
Gordon’s small pear balls
Bone marrow gel, grape leaf
Batavia Arrack is a palm sugar & red rice spirit made in Jakarta using Chinese distillation techniques. ‘Batavia’ was the name given to Jakarta by the Dutch, and to this day it is exported almost exclusively through the Netherlands. It is an Indonesian gift to the liquor world, yet this arrack is still only known by its colonial name.
FANCY BECAUSE IT'S FRENCH

course 6 (vr)

...this is not even a mooncake
but if call it such
I’m a chef, I shrug
if I misrepresented a few things
It’s because I’m awakening my creativity

...truthfully I’ve forgotten
much of my own history
maybe that’s why I’ve internalized another’s
I grew up wishing I would wake up blonde
but I could never give up my love for soy milk
even if I drink it over ice
what is more ironic
the fact you are eating something
I once created for my dogs
or
the lasting poverty we find unjust
while exclaiming their food disgusting
their actions inhumane
or
our neighbors going hungry
constrained by other's entitlement
no organs, no bones
or
a generation recognizing privilege
changing the world
with human-grade pet food