

# I Once Was a Child

BY VICTORIA CHANG

I once was a child am a child am someone's child  
not my mother's not my father's the boss  
gave us special treatment treatment for something  
special a lollipop or a sticker glitter from the  
toy box the better we did the better the plastic prize made  
in China one year everyone got a spinning top  
one year everyone got a tap on their shoulders  
one year everyone was fired everyone  
fired but me one year we all lost our words one year  
my father lost his words to a stroke  
a stroke of bad luck stuck his words  
used to be so worldly his words fired  
him let him go without notice can they do that  
can she do that yes she can in this land she can  
once we sang songs around a piano *this land is your land*  
*this land is my land* in this land someone always  
owns the land in this land someone who owns  
the land owns the buildings on the land owns  
the people in the buildings unless an earthquake  
sucks the land in like a long noodle

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