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Why I Invited You But Not My Father to My Wedding
(for Mr Leong, my Secondary School English Teacher)

by Nilofer Neubert

because you read the book before recommending it
because you facilitated a lit class for only six pupils
because you discussed Lord of the Flies
 even though it wasn't compulsory
because you transformed our classroom into a stage many times
because you wrote questions in the margins of my stories
because you didn't write me off after I cheated
because you ignored your lesson plan when the twin towers fell
because you listened
 when my father took off without saying goodbye
because before you moved on,
 you said goodbye
because your door's still open.

Remembering Adeline

by Juliana Teo

And when you ask what I remember most about her
Don't ask about her academic results
Or what kind of work she did.
How she wore her hair in braids
And if she played an instrument.
Ask instead how brave she was
To live and work with a faulty valve in her heart
Her determination to be independent
Teaching herself to read chords
So that she could sing to the tots.
Ask if she had fallen in love
And how beautiful that love was.
Ask about the baby in her womb
Which she carried to the tomb.
Ask not how she died
Ask about the void she left behind in the people she loved.
Adeline, my sister, a twin. My friend.

Hainanese Chicken Rice in Singapore

by Oliver Seet

Long lost alas from the kitchens of Hainan
the legendary skills of masters of the palate
— the kings of good taste
who can tease out from coarse grains,
fragrance embedded in the core
enveloped in the essence
of farm-bred fowls of choice,
who can endow the meat
of chickens
with such succulence and flavour
garnished with sauce of paprika
ground to a paste with garlic and other undisclosed spices,
enhanced by ginger
and the thickest black sauce
and soup that sings to the buds of taste
— chicken rice of such appeal
that daily draws
hordes of the hungry
from every corner of the island.

No one excels the chefs of Hainan
who fled to Nanyang
leaving their native land
devoid of culinary skills
as they sought out
new havens of peace
where good appetite
springs eternal
for the delights
that they alone can offer.