

Beautiful Country (미국¹)

*o beautiful for spacious skies—
she kneels on old newspapers, staring*

at fragments of her unfulfilled 동심², torn
to pieces like the persimmon peels parting
from her knifing hands.

*a flock of sparrows, spilling
for amber waves of grain,*

for one more sunrise in her
provincial life. the radio, buzzing
with *Mother of Mine*, the song she sings

*with a tongue too stiff for smooth th's and m's,
for purple mountain majesties—*

the fall breeze tickles her hair, a silver
diadem fit for the crescent moon
as she peels a pile of persimmons,

*drawing a lifeless mist
above the fruited plain!*

she blames her
mother, 마더³, martyr,
for shredding the newsprint dreams

*of peace—she's yearned for
America! America!*

but every day she, 원정⁴, endured a journey
only to wake the next morning to a grey film
of dreams ghosting her fingertips,

*the thorny persimmon tree outside
mourning the fall of its suns.
God shed His grace on thee.*

¹ Korean for *the United States of America* (the character, 미, means *beautiful*, and 국 means *country*)

² Korean for *childhood dreams*

³ Korean pronunciation of *mother*

⁴ Korean for *journey* (also the name of my grandmother)