

**On the Verge Writing Contest 2023, Second-Place Poetry Winner**  
**By Maya Somogyi**  
**Fissures in Ceramic**

They say all we have  
is each other. My uncle, the  
rosary-knuckled man  
and if I take a bun from the steamer basket  
and hold it in my mouth, I'll swallow all the smoke  
before I show a single burn. Your

oldest brother

who tears a rupture in his face  
the way we peel back hangnails. Like  
we can't help it.  
He says, there's more than one kind  
of people. Low-hung veil  
receding, how much fits in a single  
siu mai wrapper. Table-span with a wood grain  
patterned like generational divide, wood grain  
mouthing delightedly between us,  
I am the other kind of  
people.

When ceramic splits, more  
than the breaking: the  
shift of glass. One side takes  
trembling, running leaps away. I  
want you to say something because  
I'm your daughter. All  
I have is you. Egg held membrane with  
insides reaching. hold  
a little more.

That mouths make wounds

the thin slit of yours, smoke-swallowing  
wounds me. This  
is not a split an equal war. My words

chrysanthemum-soft, sagging  
into my lungs. On my side, where  
there is only one person.