POETRY

Zhang Yu, 23, from China

by Bänoo Zan



"Zentangle 44, 2015" by Brigitte Thonhauser-Merk

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You look sixteen —
are not fluent
in Cantonese or Mandarin

Students take a long time
translating my two-word questions
for you

Your eyes are
still lost

You don’t bring lunch
Use every scrap of newspaper
I bring to class

Still after two months
you can’t answer this question,
“How are you today?”

But you know
the language of smiles

I hear your parents
sent you over
so they can come after

They didn’t give you
a sharp mind

Now, like the gods of yesterday,
they are withdrawing their love

because you don’t have
what they haven’t given you

After lunch break
your head is on the desk

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your ears pounding with music
from the land
that rejected you

I see
this is not new
to you

Still I wish
you could read this
some day

to see that
someone saw

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