
Pro Rege

Volume 37
Number 2 *Fine Arts Issue 2008*

Article 8

December 2008

Finding Mother in Busan

Mary Dengler
Dordt College, mary.dengler@dordt.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/pro_rege



Part of the [Creative Writing Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Dengler, Mary (2008) "Finding Mother in Busan," *Pro Rege*: Vol. 37: No. 2,
14 - 15.

Available at: https://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/pro_rege/vol37/iss2/8

This Poetry is brought to you for free and open access by the University Publications at Digital Collections @ Dordt. It has been accepted for inclusion in Pro Rege by an authorized administrator of Digital Collections @ Dordt. For more information, please contact ingrid.mulder@dordt.edu.

Finding Mother in Busan

Mary Dengler

A bowl of flat black stones in water
On a woven mat,
A vase of weathered twigs
At daily tea set out in tiny blue-veined cups,
A bonsai arching left
Beneath a branch of driftwood
Dragged from ancient shores and hanging on our wall,
And pots of Jade
In sparsely furnished rooms
Of shadowy slate and earthen greens
Where penciled slender birds perched recklessly
On arching trees beneath a globe of red
Implied a heart and frame
At odds with Carolina brick and New York wood.

When I was sick
And childhood friends would come inside to play,
Their eyes would trip from rocks to twigs;
Their laughter hush in smoky wooded scents.
When I was well,
Their houses seemed oppressive, crowded, loud and thick
With couches, doilies, smell of cooking meat.

I'd come alone to take my seat at tea
Content to roam internal landscapes
In my mother's home
Unconscious of their forming power.
My inner palette added yellows, blues, and whites
From mother's poem
"White sails billowing on a sun-washed sea."

Now, from my window in Busan,
I've found that hidden frame
That shaped her vision, painting mine.
The feet of mist-wrapped mountains
Touch the bay,
Where boats lie anchored motionless
At night for fish and squid to dress
The bowls of rice on tables of Busan.
At dawn above the fleece-wrapped heads of ancient hills
Like warrior sages keeping guard,
A reddened globe emerges like the face of God

To guide high-rises
In their endless march along the bay
And move the traffic river-like along the bridge
And play around the Buddha laughing
Miles above my head.

But on the quiet Keong-Chu forest paths
Where knowing hands constructed frames to help each tree
Out-stretch its weathering twigs in wind-blown reach,
The rain taps streams of flat black rocks
Arranged for contemplation and retreat.
Scented woodland smoke and rocks and reaching limbs
Have brought me home to Mother's world for tea.