



YUAN AUNG

Fifth grade: one of the weirdest years of my life. To my best friend, I was a girl; to others, I was a guy. That was because of my worst haircut. My head was shaved. Just imagine that. Shaved.

BURMA

Where I'm from, the burning sun beats down
on your face as you play with friends.
A place where football is soccer,
and soccer is unknown.
Where the wonderful smells of fried dishes come from every corner,
the smell of monhinga and curry.
For me, it's usually a place where all my flesh and blood
can just walk over to my house in their colorful skirts.
With different voices,
high, low, quiet, loud,
everyone sounded unique as if they were singing in their native tongue.
Where potholes can be found about every five inches in the ragged
concrete.
Where I'm from, we aren't all camera ready.
We make the best of things with each other.
Where stereotypes come from and not all true.
We were gentle, not barbaric. Friendly, not always defensive.
Where I'm from, the common question was, "Have you eaten yet?"
And where I'm from, if the answer is "No,"
an invitation comes along.