

“Dumplings”

By heather c. lou

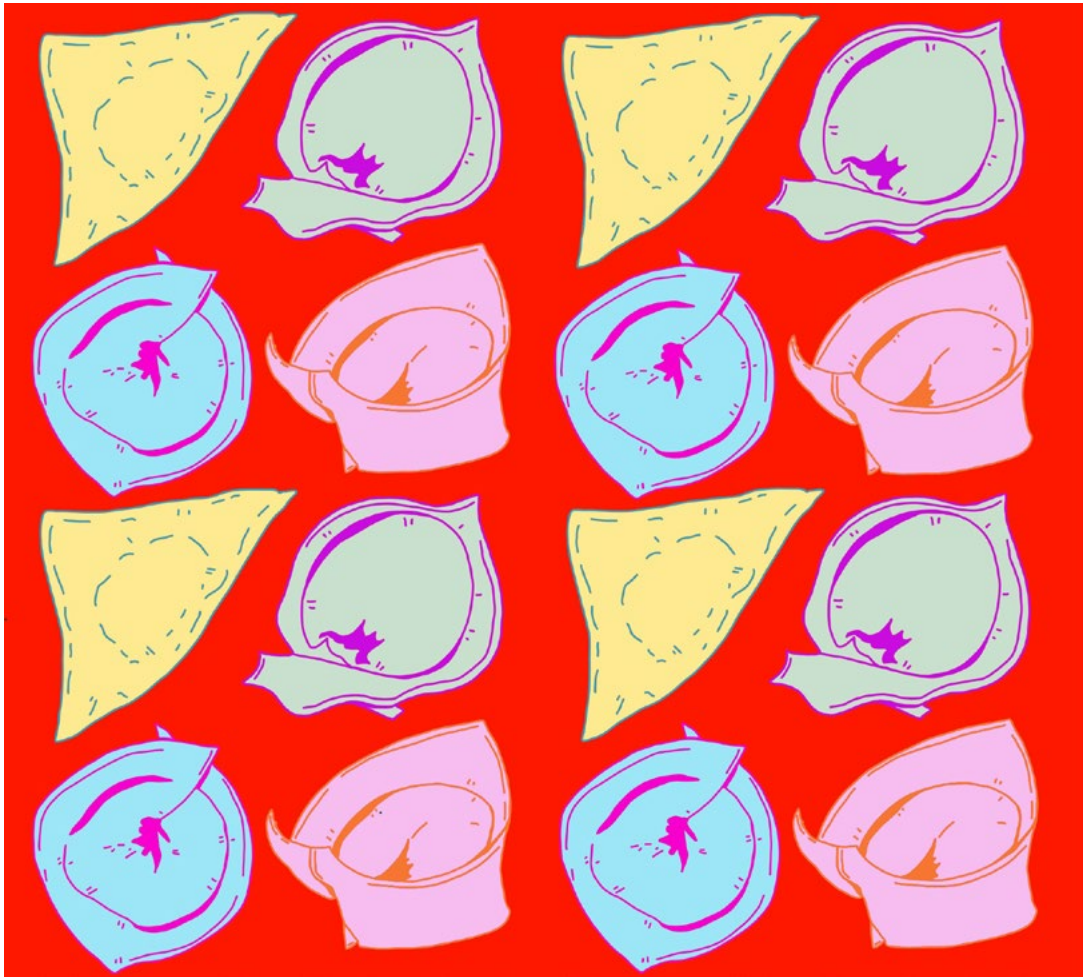
we sat across the table
the back of my legs stuck to the plastic
that covered the seats of her dining room
chairs
all of the ingredients laid perfectly arranged
on the lazy susan, waiting to be
assembled
at six, my time had come to be written in
on the lou family secret- how to wrap the
perfect wonton
in silence, amma showed me how to
nourish myself and the ones i love for the
generations to come
just like her amma probably did for her
her pale and wrinkled hands caressed the
dough and perfectly portioned the meat
dotted egg to bind
pinched edges and folded with care
bended quickly but not to tear the delicate
package
she made it look effortless
as i followed her steps
i fumbled
i furrowed my brows
bit my lips
grumbled with frustration
my tiny little wonton was a pile of mush
she looked at me and simply said “again.”
“again. again. again.”
that day i made all of five wontons for our
meal while amma made a bounty
but what i didn’t know then
was that amma had persevered
she had fought and been silenced her
whole life
she had made wontons in a restaurant that
she owned
she struggled and had immigrated
men cat called her
called her their china doll
she had been scared and alone

did she ever fight back
did she ever say something to their sexist
and sinophobic remarks
and although her work seemed effortless
it was a culmination of her many years of
wisdom
her guidance from ancestors
love and nourishment
resistance
practice
i have white hairs now
i’m getting wrinkles and i’m getting rounder
i’m walking like my amma more and more
each day
each time i make wontons, it’s becoming
more like muscle memory
i can feel amma with me each time i make
them
“again,” she says.
“again. again. again.”

heather c. lou



heather c. lou (she/her/hers) is an angry gemini earth dragon, multiracial, asian, queer, cisgender, gender expansive, disabled, survivor/surviving, anxious, and depressed womxn of color artist and educator based in st. paul, minnesota, which is the hxstorical occupied land of the Dakota and Ojibwe peoples. find out more about hclou at: hclouart.com or [instagram.com/hclou](https://www.instagram.com/hclou)



heather c. lou, *dumplings reprise*, 2021, digital art, 12" x 12".