

Prologue

The dream unfolds as it always does, light goes to black, then back to color again. The last sensation from the awake-world is my limbs seizing like a jerked marionette as I pass into the deepest stages of sleep.

But this time, the dream is different.

This time, I'm dreaming I'm her.

She is sitting in a slow-moving trainlike vehicle, maybe the Small World ride at Disneyland. Her neck is craning like crazy; she's going to meet someone, but is seized by a sudden anxiousness that she's gotten the time or location wrong.

Another train is going the other way. In it are two girls, who catch her eye and wave.

"I'm Sarah," says one, in a Barbie-doll voice.

"So am I," says the other. The two are holding hands, looking like paper-doll cutouts.

She turns to face them. "You can't both be Sarah."

"Why not?" says the Barbie-doll voice.

"After all, we've got two mothers," says the other.

"You've only got one mother, ONE," she says. She decides she will break the chain of their hands and then everything will be logical again.

The trains jerk, beginning to pull them in opposite directions. She jumps off to pursue them. But try as she might, the girls' train pulls away too fast.

First one, then the other laughs, all mouth and teeth.

GET BACK ON THE RIDE, YOU!

I wake with a gasp. When I was little, I once did jump off one of the rides at Disneyland—I wanted to go live with the Pirates of the Caribbean. My friend Ashley beside me had been scared of them, but not me. I knew I'd be happy with those pirates, daggers in teeth, skin stained the same walnut brown I turned in the summer.

It takes me a second to recall the larger contours of my dream. When I remember that *she* was in it, I moan. Why didn't I think to look in a mirror? In the other dreams, her face is always hidden in shadow.

The tears come, another gasp escapes like steam. This chance to see

what she looked like, gone. I stopper my mouth with a pillow, praying Christine won't wake and come running, face earnest and dutiful as a volunteer firefighter, hands soft, murmuring words of comfort. *You had a bad dream, sweetie?*

I can't bear to have her touch me.



Where she is, it's day, not night, she's just woken from her afternoon nap.

Usually she sleeps light as a cat, whiskers alert to catch the slightest change in the air. But this time, her limbs had felt pinned as if by stone or thick ropes. Someone might have even said, "*Chub-gi*, excuse me, but I really would like to make a purchase—ahem," and she wouldn't have been able to move a muscle.

While her body lay helpless, some other part of her had flown like a blown leaf all over the known world. From Korea to America, perhaps even beyond. So far, in fact, that when she wakes, she finds herself surprised that she is, well, herself.

She is reminded (though she is Christian) of the beautiful Buddhist koan: Am I a person dreaming I'm a butterfly—or am I a butterfly dreaming I'm a person?