

Girl insomniac

by [Miho Nonaka](#) in the [December 11, 2013](#) issue

No one understood my nightly need to be reassured
I'd wake up again the next day. Eyes closed, I saw
no sheep but the tufts of pampas grass looming silver
like a solitary path.

The scroll hung above me, a verse in five
and seven, its flowing hand thin
and illegible—I still knew it was about our life
not lasting very long.

How is it that adults were okay with such a prospect?

In July, bamboo blades rustled against
paper cranes and prayer strips; I wondered how
I'd made the cut, when I wasn't a boy
my father wanted, wasn't a *koi* princess
my mother said would magically turn
her tail into a pair of legs.

I looked for the fabled rabbits on the moon,
a family of them taking turns
to pound rice into pearly cakes
along their dark, elliptical orbit.