

Photograph of My Grandfather in a Western Business Suit, 1950

not in the three kingdoms of antiquity
 but in the tiny kingdom inside my skull
 i imagine 할아버지
 a wealthy silk factory owner married to my grandmother
 and with three concubines
 honorable social *de facto* circumstance father
 to how many children i'll never know where i begin
 ceremoniously is the day he dies 육이오
 first day of the war the vicissitudes of fortune we've learned to accept
 like stones into our pockets stones into our mouths
 our silence intensifying sound gunfire and bombs and what to wail
 when a widow flees with her children
 leaves my ten-year-old mother under a chestnut tree to die
 gunshot wounds and nowhere to go the factory gone the house gone
 the trouble with death is we are always dying
 starvation or exposure or war it doesn't matter
 my grandmother will hate my mother all the days of her life will tell her
you should have died instead of him 불쌍함
 in the last picture taken my grandfather
 admires the landscape unfolding turning white
 promises of crocuses their golden blooms bursting
 in that final spring before the north koreans appear
 shooting him in the chest for owning this land for wearing a western suit