

## Portland (포트랜드)

Finding a replica of my mother's home-made Kimchi,  
the first surprising discovery in a coastal city constructed  
with red bricks hovering over cobblestone streets  
shielding the flavor from my mother's kitchen inside a

restaurant on Exchange street. The pungent smell of  
garlic and spice kept my memories of home fermented  
inside a clay pot, waiting for the waitress to say:

*Have you eaten today?* - because that is the closest

any Asian parent will come to say, *I love you*. As I sit  
with a sizzling pot on a window-side counter, I watch  
a seagull picking at the discarded fries on the ground.  
Plucking away at each bite graciously. Satiating their

hunger so they can hover over the city once again,  
filling the soundscapes with nautical cries, a melody  
that completes the song we call Portland. The first place  
I've called home after 13 nomadic years

stepping on countless welcome mats I've immigrated through.  
I unpack my suitcase next to the dining chair as I find  
comfort between each careful kisses from a metal spoon  
transporting kimchi and rice, plucking away at each bite graciously,

satiating my hunger of home by finding a new one  
in a coastal city, constructed with red bricks hovering  
over cobble stone streets, reinventing the flavors from my  
mother's cooking on a single-sheet menu, inside what used

to be a hibachi, but now it is my home.