

## Belated Letter Of Thanks To Da Wang And Daughter

What can we say for ourselves after so much time. What's the measure? Another day of roar becomes evening, and I can still see you—a nice man—a man given to peaceful loving routines. Or I can say, we were all peaceful in a time not known for its peace—for example, a month after the Red Army bulldozed a human landfill around Beijing, I bought greasy pecan cookies three evenings a week at the market, and you

rode by on your bicycle in the darkness. You were the man with the big smile, singing to his tiny little girl—a girl so small, I even thought, in the darkness, if she might be a bag of oranges. But she was no bag of oranges, and you were no soldier, only a lullaby bike rider, and I was just a cookie man. For years now when the evening comes

down, we've stayed like this: me, a bumbling big faced foreign man strolling mindlessly under a parasol of trees with Chinese cookie grease bleeding through a brown paper bag—and you pedaling through the darkness with your most precious cargo. I just wanted to say: "Hello, Mr. Wang." I just wanted to wish you well, and thank you for singing songs that have kept the darkness friendly—all these years—little songs wrapped in a circle of dust, stretching from one side of night to the other.

J. C. ELLEFSON