

**green**

*by Pamela Lee Wong*

Bits of green. Yuck.

Raw diced green onions peer back at me as I look down at the soup.

Steamy, comforting smells of won ton soup drift up from a warm pot clutched between my five-year-old legs. Mommy brought her largest aluminum pot to carry this precious soup home. The dented container with its dull silver lid and worn, black knob is like one of the family.

Tonight there will be big bowls of rich, comforting chicken soup, with meaty, smooth "won tons" floating around. Each won ton gets wrapped in a light-colored skin of dough which turns soft as a cloud when it's cooked. Daddy says that the name "won ton" is a Chinese way to say "it swallows as smooth as a cloud." Slivers of pink, sweet barbecued pork "cha sieu" decorate the top...and always, always those bitter green onion bits that adults seem to like so much. I push the green stuff aside in my bowl so they don't spoil the won ton taste on my tongue.

There is seldom money for extra treats these days. During the week Daddy struggles to keep his small Chinese manufacturing company open. He says it's pretty hard getting business contracts in a white-man's world.



But once in a while Daddy can set aside a little extra money to buy a steaming batch of take-out won ton soup for a special dinner. Baby Chris and me sit on the smooth leatherette back seat of the white four-door Packard sedan. Mommy and Daddy sit on the front seat.

We keep Daddy company on the 20-minute drive in our shiny white Packard sedan. We drive from our two-

bedroom house in San Francisco's Sunset District to Chinatown on the other side of town.

As soon as we have the soup and Daddy makes sure I'm holding the covered pot tightly between my short legs, we make our way back home. I'm so short I can barely peek out the car window. I spy other neighborhoods, white church steeples, and my favorite library. We enter a dark tunnel and then, on the other side, pass very tall trees along Sunset Boulevard. My mouth waters as I think about the soup treat. It is 1950. Worries are set aside. We are going to enjoy delicious won ton soup!

From this kinder's perspective, we are about to have the best possible treat.

A fond memory of life in San Francisco.

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