

Jet-Black Serenade

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For Thanh Bui

Black hair tangled on

your combing fingers.

We ran into lilac hours

as a hatching season rains ash
onto paper flowers.

Rubber soles evaporate

on sidewalks, and so we bid
a thousand times goodbye

to silk tunics and *mai vàng*¹,

making our peace with
mooncakes and tea. We were
forgetful, but how forgetful

we became of the long,

obsidian roots springing

from our foreign minds.

Yet, in the water shards

littering the sidewalks—

you are the girl with jet black hair,
and I, the native son.

¹ *small yellow flowers purchased during the Vietnamese Lunar New Year* POLARIS VOL. 65