

## Edited poems from I MET UR MOM IN ITAEWON

By Roya Motazedian

the steps i take  
trace over the footprints  
of a body that has this place  
engraved in their dna  
the cracks/ in the sidewalk  
are their /maps

i am lost and afraid  
but they are bored of  
|||||  
the low hanging power lines  
the jagged steps to their school  
next to the stench of the sewers

i've always been  
a wildflower blooming  
dig my heels down  
and just look up

the sky looks the same  
wherever you go

i'll always have dirt  
under my fingernails  
these cracks in the sidewalk

other bodies  
reach for my hands dirt  
under *their* fingernails, shouting *liebe! liebe! liebe!*  
they take me to the club street past  
the hotel named after a city i'll return to

//////nyapi////////////////////hive////////////////////juntos////////////////////  
////////////////////danco////////////////////as soon as the  
lights go off here in itaewon  
///dayandnight////////////////////halmaek////////////////////we all end  
up on the same dance floor

## **crying in the club because I'M FUCKING UGLY**

crying in the club is different  
when you're actually fucking crying in the club  
4am and the one espresso shot i had  
under the scarlet letter  
is long gone

reptile tears

hurts to rub my eyes  
'cause crocodiles like me have claws  
'cause the cookie cutter men here  
scale other bodies but my scales  
are too scary

the floor is sticky and  
my tears don't help  
the cigarette stench sticks to my shirt  
rackless, racks  
racks, rackless  
either way i catch no one's eye

his hand on her thigh  
and never  
on mine

so one last time  
DJ, swing me round and bleed me dry  
with Justin Bieber  
mop the floor with my worthless body  
while the cookies and their cutters dance

epilogue: *back in the red G, Annie's cold dumplings smell meaty*  
*6am, post-clubbing we sit outside room 35*  
*i stare at the writing on the wall*  
*"canadians have the biggest dicks"*

### **from nyapi to halmaek**

[Ally] lost her phone in waikiki  
i know because i walked the club street  
asked every bouncer if they'd seen  
a black purse

i don't know when but  
itaewon broke me

maybe i'll have a frozen beer at halmaek  
maybe we'll split a cass from the cu

maybe i'll have a sip of your soju  
but mostly i'll go with a clear head  
shoulder to shoulder  
hands up, irish jig  
i don't care what plays  
from blackpink to katy perry  
*i just want to dance!*

freedom village raises its flag  
and the flag is missing an 'L'  
but is full of love  
and i am a flagpole  
watch these drag queens wrap their legs  
suffocate me with sheer beauty

i may be a tinted rainbow  
with an alien face but  
i do belong