

新年快樂

Happy New Year! It's time to rip my skin off. This is my chance to become brand new. It's the tiger year, but I'll make like a snake and shed my skin. The man-sized fetus I emerge in is all lucky colors: RED, YELLOW, SLIME! My sixth grade drama teacher asked me what my superpower would be. I said I wanted the powers of a druid. What's that, she asked? Oh, you know...the powers...of a druid...from World of Warcraft, I stutter, and avoid eye contact, refusing to mention the part about shapeshifting into animals. Well, she said she wanted the power to shed her skin and emerge smooth and blemish free. As a middle-aged woman of course she'd say that. As a mixed-raced person, I want another go at the lottery. Give me another dip in the gene pool, so when a random lady looks at your naked body in the mirror while you are recovering from almost fainting in the hot springs, she won't say 很漂亮, *are you Taiwanese?* She'll just know. And instead of looking at my mom, and saying, *you must look like your father*, she'll say, *oh, I see it now!* It's all in the eyes. Yeah, the eyes that my mixed-raced best friend from high school wanted to surgically widen. I could have dropped to my knees and wailed, don't you know what those eyes mean? Those eyes that are your mother's, and your grandmother's. It's fine, do what you want. Cut up your eyes. I want to rip my skin off, sometimes—but being born again this year would make me a tiger, which is good but not better than a dragon, which is me. And this skin is me, it matches my dad's. This hair is me, it's like my mom's. The jade around my neck is me, it's from my grandmother. How did the cops know to write ASIAN/UNKNOWN on the police report when I lost my wallet? They saw my name on my ID—the hidden one that shows up on legal documents, *Tsi-Yu*. I don't need to say anything. I don't need to prove anything. I can be anything I want to be. This is why I like video games. Look, I just shapeshifted into a bear, and I can turn into a bird, too. During Lunar New Year, it's the shapeshifting druids of Moonglade that throw a party and sell you fireworks. In World of Warcraft, I am a night elf, and that's what I'm going to write in the race box next time I have to fill out a form.