

## **Kai Kai and I**

I often try to find the roots of Kai Kai and how she disappeared. It occurred to me in a talk with my boss, and now I often think about her. Where did she go, the Kai Kai who would run down the street to get strangers to buy more cookies? Tell them that it's okay if they don't have their wallet, we take Apple Pay? Where did she go, the unabashed one, the free one? Was she childish, or was she brave? When did she disappear? If I had kept her, would she be better than me? The me that hesitates before customers, the me that won't exchange a hot drink when I asked for it cold? Was it a choice to let her go? Is she all gone, or only slightly? When that man hopped over our garbage-alleyway door, glanced at the camera and ran without anything in his hands, did he take her? When my grandfather put up the chicken wire and the spikes on that door, did he keep her from coming back? I often feel like a shadow of her, a sliver, cut from the best parts of her and knotted together with all of my fears. But I don't think if she returned she'd be able to banish them, either.