

Look – it's about to rain.

1. Let's make it one umbrella.

You're rummaging your bag for an umbrella. Your mind is moving onto the next calendar event. Dinner, with your sister. Hotpot. Evening. Home.

It's drizzling, I say. I feel betrayed by the sky. The afternoon had been so clear, so hot, so perfect with potential. I unbuckle my bag to hunt for my own umbrella. *It's been rainy this whole week*, you agree. The sky is muted grey and there is no chance for a perfectly poetic sunset.

We weave through the narrow five-foot shophouse lanes. We're in a single file. I watch myself put one bright white shoe in front of the other. You're faster than the wide-eyed tourists, moving more purposefully than the ambling dinner patrons. I wonder if you knew how to slow down.

You ever drink here? I call out casually.

When I get strongarmed by my manager, you snort. *It gets messy here near midnight.*

I don't get to see your expression. I try to imagine the night crowd, and fail. It's like you're speaking of another world I've never stepped into. All I am at near midnight is in front of the television back home. I glance into the passing windows, the glossy manicured hands curling against a thoughtfully angled chin, the smart casual button-down sky blues rolled into three-quarter sleeves, the possibility of romance filling the restaurant of twos.