

## In Another Life

Vienna Teng

In another life  
You and I worked West Virginia coal mines  
Side by side  
Collecting the black dust like sin  
The day the main shaft caved in  
I caught your eye  
As the lantern light guttered out  
And the afterdamp swallowed us slowly  
I gripped your hand  
And caught a glance  
Of the next time 'round

In another life  
You and I were Red Guards in training  
Side by side  
We marched on Tiananmen  
Turned our own parents in  
For hoarding rice  
And in the Great Leap forward  
We crawled on our bellies and died  
A blood orange sky  
Gave a cry  
Of next time 'round

In another life  
I was married at thirteen  
You were killed at twenty-one  
On a minor battlefield  
I was buried beside my second stillborn child  
My last thought it seemed  
A fever dream

Now we sink into a summer afternoon  
Central Park in June  
Marveling at the bounty our days contain  
And we feel it like the shiver  
Of a passing train  
That other life  
Deep underground  
You and I  
Side by side  
We are the next time 'round