



MY WORK AS A PHOTOGRAPHER HAS MOSTLY KEPT ME IN WESTERN places—Italy, Scotland, and all over the United States. As a Filipino American, I rarely see overlap between my inherited culture and the subjects of my photos. I am always the brown girl on the outside.

It was a gift, then, to be in Hong Kong. Although it was different in countless ways from my motherland, there were similarities enough that I could feel a little bit at home. My black hair was happily lost at sea in waves of more black. Families ate loudly, helping themselves from communal dishes and pushing food onto each other's plates. There were enough overseas Filipinos in Hong Kong to hear bits of Tagalog everywhere I went.

And on this particular morning, the streets were calm as I was on the hunt for congee, a rice porridge similar to the lugaw, or arroz caldo, my mother made for me. I hoped it would have chunks of ginger in it, too. The air was thick with humidity or steamed rice or both, and I basked in the perfume.

— CELESTE NOCHE, *photographer*

GRAVY

Gravy is a publication of the Southern Foodways Alliance, an institute of the Center for the Study of Southern Culture at the University of Mississippi.

The SFA documents, studies, and explores the diverse food cultures of the changing American South. Our work sets a welcome table where all may consider our history and our future in a spirit of respect and reconciliation.

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