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HELEN LEE

A Peculiar Sensation:**A Personal Genealogy of Korean
American Women's Cinema**

Her hair is wrapped smoothly in a possibly comfortable bun, higher than seems right but that was the style then. She is perched on a rock, near flower bushes, smiling. My mother clutches a small handbag with gloved hands, her legs neatly arranged. Like my father, she wears a crisp suit. I don't know what color because the image is from a black and white photograph, not a memory. They are about the same age as I am now.

As adults, I think we are haunted by an image of our parents in their youth, a time we never knew them. For child immigrants, these images of the past also come from another place. Not here. A place far enough away that a telephone call occasions worry first, not joy. My parents left Seoul when I was three years old. A year later, my sister and I joined them in Toronto, Canada. Our young tongues, trained in Korean food and language but unschooled and now unhomed, were soon eager for french fries and making friends in English. I think that age especially, around three and four (just prior to grade school, when private home life becomes formatively public), was

