

Miss Saigon

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I wish I knew Miss Saigon,
When she kept her maiden name
Full of spring and promise,
Coy smile and graceful stride
down green shaded park boulevards.
Fresh-faced, bright eyes
looking outwards at new shores to explore,
How beautiful she must have been...
A love child of east and west,
Coming of age, suitors at her step.
Sheen of nostalgia
brightens her every flowering borough.

Was Miss Saigon like my mother
in her younger years?
Sprightly steps, carefree laughter
Guitar strumming, sweet voices humming
slow notes float down neighborhood alleys.
A simple golden afternoon.
White áo dài dress tails fluttering in the warm breeze as they walked
their bicycles home,
A generation of dreamy school kids,
dreams delayed indefinitely, thrust into war.
The war ate up their identities, their names.
While the streets and buildings they played
were memorialized in news photography, entombed under stark black
headlines,
epitaphs in lands they would never see.

I wish I knew Miss Saigon,
knew her through my parents' eyes
before worry lines crowded their vision,
before her name became another word for loss. What a sad thing to
happen to a name.
What a sad thing to happen to a people.
The beautiful sound of home
erased from maps and history books,
it lives on in hearts.
Constantinople, too, was a beautiful song.