Ôm Bà Cố cái đi

**Vivian Van**

*It was a perfectly normal year*

*there was no pandemic*

*no quarantine*

*no toilet paper shortage*

*no rise in asiaphobia*

*It was a normal year*

*George Floyd kept breathing*

*Breonna Taylor celebrated her degree*

*the world went on*

*and airplanes still flew—*

*so two years before she disappeared without having ever been Here*

*I flew to Việt Nam*

*and I met*

*my great-grandmother*

*my last Cố*

*Con thưa Bà Cố,*

*I say politely*

*and I bow.*

*Physical or not,*

*I would’ve regretted the distance either way*

*I guess*

*Mmm, she hums, and she smiles at me*

*Does she smile at me now?*

*Does she hug me*

*now free from the confines of physicality*?

*Đi ôm Bà Cố cái đi*

*my grandma says as she lightly pushes me forward*

*Our hug is ghostly*

*But can I call it that*

*when our hugs are so much ghostlier now*?

*I don’t want to think of my visit anymore*

*Sorry to leave you wondering about our little greetings*

*our little meals*

*our little notversations*

*I can’t tell you much more than you can figure anyway*

*All I know is that my great-grandma*

*hums and she smiles at me.* ◼