

Chris Weagle

Sojourn Alley

We meet Ji-Su, our interpreter
who works for candy and airplane rides,
who tries to teach us Hangul
as we count to ten like children
reading from baby books,
learning to sleep on the floor
in a little box above three *soju bangs*.
At night, the drunks stumble outside
our window, stitching the street
from curb to curb, yelling
into phones, leaving puddles
of what they ate and drank.
In the mornings, the *adjuma*
at the *dabang* next door
hoses the street and cleans up
broken bottles and side mirrors.
Her gold teeth always smile
as do her delivery girls,
buzzing past on scooters
like bees finding flowers.
With body language, we mime
small talk, wish we knew
how to speak, or that Ji-Su
might walk by and talk for us.

**soju bang*: a type of Korean pub

**dabang*: a type of coffee house in Korea, some which
offer scooter delivery.