

## **“Riding Alone for Thousands of Miles” by Sally Wen Mao**

In Lijiang, the sign outside your hostel  
glares: Ride alone, ride alone, ride  
alone – it taunts you for the mileage  
of your solitude, must be past

thousands, for you rode this plane  
alone, this train alone, you’ll ride  
this bus alone well into the summer night,  
well into the next hamlet, town,

city, the next century, as the trees twitch  
and the clouds wane and the tides  
quiver and the galaxies tilt and the sun  
spins us another lonely cycle, you’ll

wonder if this compass will ever change.  
The sun doesn’t need more heat,  
so why should you? The trees don’t need  
to be close, so why should you?