

The Peale, Baltimore

Out of the Blocks Storytelling Series

Recorded by Aaron Henkin; Photographs and Music by Wendel Patrick

Produced for the *Out of the Blocks* website, created by the Peale, <https://ootb.thepeale.org/>

Out of the Blocks is supported by PRX and produced with grant funding from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Cohen Opportunity Fund, The Hoffberger Foundation, Patricia and Mark Joseph, The Shelter Foundation, The Kenneth S Battye Charitable Trust, The Sana and Andy Brooks Family Fund, The Muse Web Foundation, and the William G. Baker, Jr. Memorial Fund, creator of the Baker Artist Portfolios



Speaker 1:

What do you think has been the happiest moment of your life?

Susan Zheng:

Happy moment? What do mean?

Speaker 4:

Is it ready yet? I'm waiting for my brother-in-law. He coming to pick me up.

Speaker 5:

It's ready.

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Susan Zheng:

Few more minutes. [foreign language 00:00:20]. She's the egg roll.

Speaker 5:

[foreign language 00:00:23].

Susan Zheng:

[inaudible 00:00:25], may I help you? Uh-huh (affirmative). What size? A small size or larger size? \$21.16. [foreign language 00:00:35]. Susan Zheng, S-U-S-A-N, Z-H-E-N-G. 3326 Greenmount Avenue. Mayflower Restaurant. Not easy to me to speak English. Customer, they love most [inaudible 00:00:52] chicken, egg foo young, mixed vegetable and fried rice.

Speaker 1:

Tell me how long you've been in business here at the Mayflower Buffet?

Susan Zheng:

Almost eight year.

Speaker 1:

And where are you from?

Susan Zheng:

China.

Speaker 1:

So your mother and father came here. How old were you when you guys came here?

Susan Zheng:

15 year old. Before I stayed New York.

Speaker 1:

So you came from China to New York. What brought you from New York to Baltimore? Why Baltimore?

Susan Zheng:

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Too much noise in New York.

Speaker 1:

So there was too much noise in New York. And you think it's quieter on Greenmount Avenue?

Susan Zheng:

No.

Speaker 1:

Do you like Greenmount Avenue? Do you like this neighborhood?

Susan Zheng:

It's okay. The first, I don't like here. Now, it's okay.

Speaker 1:

When you first came here, you didn't like it here. Why not?

Susan Zheng:

Before, here is too much children and doing bad stuff here and broken a window and stealing the cash. They just trigger the cashier and leave.

Speaker 1:

But you say things are better now?

Susan Zheng:

I think it's better, not before. Because now we here a neighborhood, I know who the face. They nice to we, we nice to them. That's why it's okay now.

Speaker 1:

Is this what you always wanted to do? When you were a young girl, what did you want to do?

Susan Zheng:

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I don't like doing business. It's my family, that's my parent, the restaurant. I need to take care of it. That's why I don't have choice. I don't like the restaurant. It's very tired, working hard. Sometimes busy. Sometimes it's quiet. That's why I stay here all the time, I don't get some rest.

Speaker 1:

How many hours a day do you spend here, Miss Sue?

Susan Zheng:

11 hours.

Speaker 1:

11 hours? So how long do you think you'll do this? Will you do this forever?

Susan Zheng:

Maybe. I don't know yet. Right now I'm not thinking about it.