



## BÁNH MÌ IN CHINATOWN



## Honorable Mention

It's a hole-in-the-wall on Harrison Street where she used to buy her food before her class. Nothing has changed. The most expensive sandwich still costs \$4.50, cold cuts on toasted baguette with pâté, a stick of cucumber, shredded carrots. She asks, no fish sauce, a sprinkle of chopped jalapeno, and please cut it in half—she'll make it into two meals. As she waits, she drops a dollar bill in the plastic cup next to the cash register. On the shelf behind the counter, Caishen, the God of Fortune, draped in a coat of grime, stares into eternity.

Christine Chen, 51 Years old,  
Downtown Boston.

Illustration: Maeve Huttner.