

**TO GATHER YOUR LEAVING**

To Gather Your Leaving: Asian diaspora poetry from America, Australia, UK & Europe

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ASIAN DIASPORA POETRY  
FROM AMERICA, AUSTRALIA, UK & EUROPE

# TO GATHER YOUR LEAVING

Edited by Boey Kim Cheng, Arin Alycia Fong, Justin Chia

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EDITORS' INTRODUCTION:

# GATHERING THE LEAVINGS

Migration, voluntary or involuntary, is an act of displacement, of uprooting from the natal place and culture, crossing a difficult threshold into a new environment, often involving learning an alien language and culture that challenge and interrogate one's sense of self and place. Moniza Alvi, reflecting on her family's enforced move from Lahore to London when she was only a few months old, says: "To move house is one thing. / To leave your country another." She expresses the keenly felt expulsion in "Must We Go?"—being forced to leave one's home is a traumatic experience seared into the migrant's consciousness and the memory of successive generations when the country "no longer wishes / to attach itself to you, / doesn't at all desire / to be the ground under your feet."

For the first-generation migrant poets, the act of leaving is akin to severing "the cord straight through / in one brave stroke," ("The Burden") as the Australian poet Ee Tiang Hong feels about emigrating from his hometown Malacca; despite the fact that Perth, his adopted city, offers a refuge as "Canaan and cornucopia" ("Done"), the pain of exile persists. The act of departure and separation sets in a train of consequences that affect generations to come, and thus diaspora becomes an ongoing narrative. "The end of the road is so far ahead / it is already behind us," says Ocean Vuong, who fled Vietnam in his mother's arms when he was two; the migrant and diasporic offspring are left "to gather your leaving"



(“Someday I’ll Love Ocean Vuong”). The memory of enforced departure also haunts Li-Young Lee’s “The Interrogation”: “Which house did we flee by night? / Which house did we flee by day?”

The Asian Australian poet Omar Musa, in his poem “The Great Displaced,” announces: “because there was no gun to your temple / does not mean you were not forced to leave.” Few of the poets gathered in this collection were forcibly expelled from their place of birth, though there are refugees and children of refugees, like Li-Young Lee and Ocean Vuong. Others, like Ee Tiang Hong, felt pressured into leaving because of repressive politics. Whatever the case, the rift with the home country is such that it can be only be conveyed in exilic terms. Migration does not entail the punitive state that comes with involuntary exile, but it still causes what Edward Said, an American citizen born in Mandatory Palestine, calls “the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home: its essential sadness can never be surmounted” (*Reflections on Exile* 173). Said’s comment offers a useful insight into the exilic mind and diasporic state the reader of *To Gather Your Leaving* may draw upon; the “unhealable rift” is palpably present in the works of many first-generation migrant poets, as is the sense that “achievements of exile are permanently undermined by the loss of something left behind forever” (Said 173).

This note of loss is audible in Shirley Geok-lin Lim’s “Riding to California,” its lines registering the alienation suffered by the migrant, severed from communal and ancestral ties: “If you come to a land with no ancestors / to bless you, you have to be your own/ ancestor.” The same note is struck by Marilyn Chin: “To be human means never to look back” (“Ode to Prized Koi and Baby Finches”).

Li-Young Lee shares this refusal to look back, to be trapped in the past or in the memories of a country and life that no longer exist, declaring: “I’m through with memory” (“The Interrogation”).

The leaving implies forfeiting a given or inherited sense of home to reside in a state of displacement, and it is no wonder that the question of home is noticeably present in diasporic Asian poetry, and one that is fraught with ambiguity and uncertainty. It is telling that the word “home” occurs with striking frequency in the poems gathered here, across different generations of poets. For those who have left it, home ceases to be a fixed address, and becomes less a place than an idea. Many of the poets assembled here are engaged in a relentless process of negotiation and interrogation of what and where home is. Notwithstanding the resolution to look ahead, first-generation migrant poets do invariably look back. Marilyn Chin looks back to what her family has left behind in Hong Kong; Ee Tiang Hong and Shirley Geok-lin Lim gravitate to Malacca in their poems. There is a need to reconnect with their beginnings, to affirm their heritage and roots even as they are fully committed to new migrant lives. In fact, it is not uncommon among migrants to harbour dreams of return. A key theme and motif among diasporic Asian writers is the return to the original homeland, if not in actuality, then in imagination. As Salman Rushdie says, “Exile is the dream of a glorious return” (*Step Across This Line* 182). In his poem “Circled by Circe,” the Sri Lankan-born British poet-novelist Romesh Gunesequera gives a portrait of a fellow emigrant:

After twenty years muzzled in North London  
you tell me over a cup  
of treasured Tangana tea, you have decided  
you must now go back.

The past is not dead, the memories gaining in vividness even as the migrant grows older and the probability of return more remote. The poet observes that his friend's talk is

more spiced  
with images of gold sand, tamarind trees,  
the cacophony of traffic – lorries, cars,  
bullock carts, bicycles –  
rising out of the deep roar of the sea . . .

These sensory details, fragmented images of the past, seem to blot out the present place and time, betraying the migrant's deep and ineradicable ties to the original home. Even if the migrant doesn't return physically, there are these imaginary returns, moments of Proustian recall so powerful and visceral that it triggers a bi-locale and bifocal experience that allows the migrant to straddle the past and present, two places and cultures in a single instant. Agha Shahid Ali's "Postcard from Kashmir" embodies an instant of bilocation, as the poet holds the image of his native place in his adopted home:

This is home. And this the closest  
I'll ever be to home. When I return,  
the colors won't be so brilliant,  
the Jhelum's waters so clean,  
so ultramarine. My love  
so overexposed.

And my memory will be a little  
out of my focus, in it

a giant negative, black  
and white, still undeveloped.

The postcard is an object of commercial tourism, a photo-souvenir and report travellers send to those at home. Here, its purpose and effect are altered. Rather than a report from abroad, it is news from home, and its image evokes the displacement of exile, the attendant longing, homesickness and nostalgia. Held in the hand of the exile in a place that is home and not home, it abolishes the near and far, past and present, and evokes a liminal moment and space that brings together memory and forgetting.

Memory and its corollary nostalgia are key themes in diasporic writing, especially among first-generation writers who have lived a significant part of their lives in the original country. As migrant writers in the new country, they have had to reinvent and map themselves in new spaces, and negotiate the processes of settlement and assimilation. At the same time that they are forming new ties and readings of place, they inescapably look back to the originary home, to the lives and places left behind. The backward look stems as much from a sense of loss and displacement as from the migrants' need to embed the past in their new lives in the adopted country. Unlike the second or third generations, the memories of the ancestral homeland are lived and strong, creating binaries of old homeland/host country, past/present, self/other. Meena Alexander's work is haunted by memories of Kerala; Romesh Gunsekera, Seni Seneviratne and Sunil Govinnage by Sri Lanka, despite their divergent diasporic trajectories; Ee Tiang Hong and Shirley Geok-lin Lim by Malacca. Thus they inhabit a liminal state and develop a double consciousness, straddling binaries of host country/original home, new culture and language/natal culture and mother

tongue, present/past. Even as they embrace their new citizenship and reinvent themselves as Asian Australian, Asian American, and British Asian, they often write as émigrés rather than new citizens of the host country, and their sense of exile gravitates towards the lost homeland.

Many of the poems curated here are mnemonic returns of some sort, enacting real and imaginary returns to the parental or ancestral home. These are attempts not so much to restore what has been lost—the cultural heritage, the familial history—but to weave the past into the present narrative, to bridge the old and new worlds, and to fashion some sense of continuity and coherence out of the experience of disruption and discontinuity. Wong May captures how the past bleeds into an ongoing present: “the lostness that 20 years later / has fetched me here” (“Kambong Bahru, 1975”). A generation later, Li-Young Lee declares “Memory revises me” and adds that “the past / joins the greater / telling and is” (“Furious Versions”). And more recently, Jenny Xie writes: “A chewed over hour, late. / Where the long ago past and the future come / to settle scores / ...Nothing is as far as here” (“Long Nights”). Intertwined with the twin motifs of loss and memory are tropes that bind poets of the global Asian diaspora: elements of Asian heritage and culture, familial narrative and ancestral history, reverence of parents and grandparents, postcoloniality and historical trauma (the Vietnam War, the Cambodian genocide). Fathers and mothers cast long shadows and the key of the diasporic poem is often elegiac, memorialising dead parents, and resolving conflicting emotions and thoughts about them. Shirley Geok-lin Lim and Ee Tiang Hong return to ancestral graves in Malacca’s Chinese cemetery, and Eric Choc to his father’s grave in the Manoa Chinese Cemetery, to placate their fathers’ spirits, while mother and daughter relationships inform

many of Cathy Song's and Marilyn Chin's poems. In his tender poem "I Ask My Mother to Sing," Li-Young Lee listens to songs about a place and culture he is alien to but which is his heritage: "I've never been in Peking, or the Summer Palace, / nor stood on the great Stone Boat to watch / the rain begin on Kuen Ming Lake, the picnickers / running away in the grass." Though he has not been to his ancestral homeland, he experiences a homecoming through the cultural and familial memory transmitted through the song, and the presence of his mother and grandmother.

Perhaps the most common and compelling embodiment of heritage among these poems is the figure of the grandmother. A ubiquitous figure in familial narratives, she appears frequently in the anthology: Li-Young Lee's poem cited above, Agha Shahid Ali's "Prayer Rug," Merlinda Bobis's "Grandmother and the Border," Rick Barot's "UDFJ-39546284," Wing Tek Lum's "It's Something Our Family Has Always Done," Cathy Song's "Easter: Wahiawa, 1959," Sokunthary Sway's "Don't Let Your Heritage Be Past Tense," Bunkong Tuon's "Reciting Alphabets," Jenny Xie's "Naturalization," Eunice Andradra's "recognition," Shanta Acharya's "Loose Talk," Moniza Alvi's "The Sari," Mona Zahra Attamimi's "Betel Nut," and Sarah Howe's "Crossing from Guangdong." The grandmother is a re-assuring presence, her matriarchal authority and knowledge projecting a stable, reliable point of reference in the shifting and changing landscapes of Asian diaspora. As Timothy Yu observes wryly, she is a cliché in Asian diaspora literature:

But here we are, working our way through an anthology of Asian  
American poetry,  
one cliché at a time.  
We read poems about silent grandmothers in the kitchen.  
We smell the aromas of their wok-fired cooking.  
("Chinese Silence No. 12")

Nevertheless, she represents a vital key to the past, being an incarnation of familial history and cultural knowledge. In “Inheritance,” Andy Quan confesses: “My grandmother’s blood courses through me . . .” and her passing signals a break in the familial narrative in his elegy “Generations.” Eileen Chong’s “Chinese Singing,” inspired by Li-Young Lee’s “I Ask My Mother to Sing,” evokes her grandmother’s voice, its talismanic reach bringing back a childhood memory and also the poet’s forgotten mother tongue: “She sings from memory, / in the dialect of her youth: / the two of us walk in the rain/ sharing a single small umbrella.” Simply because she is the surviving custodian of the past, the key to all that the poet has lost or forgotten on the diasporic path, the grandmother has the power to reconnect the poet with her beginnings, with the roots and source of her cultural identity.

Besides symbolic, imaginary and mnemonic returns to the original homeland in Asia, there are actual returns that are increasingly a vital trope and theme in contemporary literature of Asian diaspora. An essential rite-of-passage among diasporic offspring, and for those who left the home country at an early age, is a return journey to seek out roots and origins, or to seek answers to the ongoing questions of home and identity. Sarah Howe’s prize-winning debut *Loop of Jade* is scored with the theme of return to Hong Kong, her place of birth and childhood, and to Guangdong, to discover her mother’s roots. As a first-generation migrant and as a child of an English father and Chinese mother, Howe is an embodiment of diasporic heterogeneity and cultural hybridity, what Rushdie calls a “translated person,” for whom identity is “plural and partial” (*Imaginary Homelands* 15). Retracing her mother’s migration across the riverine border, Howe seeks “to reintegrate the Chinese half of my identity” (Tyrrell-Morin). She calls it “this strange

pilgrimage to home” in her poem “Crossing from Guangdong”; the journey is a homecoming for her on two levels: a returning to her place of birth, and a return to her mother’s place of origin.

Among the poems assembled here, there are returns undertaken by first and successive generations of diasporic writers: Wong May, Eileen Chong, Miriam Wei Wei Lo and Fiona Sze-Lorrain to Singapore; Ee Tiang Hong and Shirley Geok-lin Lim to Malaysia; Imtiaz Dharker and Moniza Alvi to Pakistan; Meena Alexander, Michelle Cahill and Shanta Acharya to India; Rick Barot, Nick Carbó, Eunice Andrada and Merlinda Bobis to the Philippines; Adam Aitken and Pimone Triplett to Thailand; Ouyang Yu, Lachlan Brown and Jenny Xie to China; Ocean Vuong, Diana Khoi Nguyen and Nguyễn Tiên Hoàng to Vietnam. This reveals the heterogeneity, the cultural diversity and geo-political range of global Asian diaspora. It also reveals how irresistibly strong a hold the Asian home exerts on the migrant mind and imagination, and how vital returns are to the idea of heritage, cultural and ethnic identity, and the continuing diasporic narrative. There are also necessary returns to places of historical and postcolonial trauma, to understand and come to terms with the pain and suffering inflicted by war and civil conflicts. Suji Kwock Kim’s and Myung Mi Kim’s poems are haunted by the ravages of the Korean War; theirs is a poetry of second-hand witness, the confronting images a necessary reminder of the traumatic history of their ancestral land. Sokunthary Svy and Bunkong Tuon were refugees who fled the Khmer Rouge and carried the freight of memories of those who did not survive the genocide. For Svy, Cambodia is “a country full of wraiths” (“Baptism”) and for Tuon, the trauma remains seared into his migrant memory; the unspeakable atrocities and the extreme suffering from his childhood still haunt his return in intense vividness:



My father walked up  
to the Khmer Rouge  
after they killed the children  
and opened their stomachs  
to eat the livers.  
("Debt")

Trauma narratives of colonial and postcolonial struggles, wars and genocide inform the works of poets of Indochinese origin and descent. Bryan Thao Worra and Mai Der Vang grapple with the bloody legacy of the Vietnam War that spilled over the border into Laos. They are children of Hmong parents, from a Laotian community that fought for the Americans and suffered persecution from the Pathet Lao in the wake of the American pullout. Even though Thao Worra was adopted by an American pilot and left Laos at the age of three, his consciousness still carries the trauma his country and family lived through. He says: "that's the way refugee memory works" ("Missoula, 1976"); the forgetting that the new life brings cannot quite erase lived experiences of war and exile. In "Preparations for Southeast Asia," as he embarks on a return journey in search of his birth parents, he acknowledges the guilt of the visiting emigrant: "At least we could say "we went," "we returned," / "We did not stay forever." The yearning to share the travails of the Hmong people also underwrites Mai Der Vang's Walt Whitman Prize-winning debut *Afterland*. The Laotian landscapes in her poems are devastated, war-torn, the wounds still gaping, the air inhabited by spirits of those who perished in the war. Mobilizing the beliefs and customs of the Hmong community, Vang's atavistic poems move between the living and the dead, between realms of the body and

spirit and braids personal with collective history, evoking Hmong plight and diaspora in the image of a vast “graveyard” (“Dear Soldier of the Secret War,”). In “Calling the Lost,” she tells us “Hmong people say one’s spirit can run off, / Go into hiding underground.” Hmong spirituality is again invoked in “Transmigration” to convey the flight and displacement caused by war: “Spirit, when I flee this jungle, you must too. / I will take our silver bars, necklace dowry, and the kettle / forged from metal scraps just after the last monsoon.” The haunting poem ends by drawing the poet and reader into the ongoing diasporic narrative: “I am refugee. You are too.”

Across the border, the epicenter of the violence that spread across the border to Laos and Cambodia, Vietnam has produced a diasporic literature that still grapples with the legacy of the two wars (the French and American), and the aftermath of refugeeism. Ocean Vuong’s “Immigrant Haibun” recreates the perilous crossing his mother made among the boat people fleeing the Communist regime, the Japanese prose poem form enacting the narrative of departure and flight. Near the end of the poem, the voice of the persona affirms the power of memory against forgetting, the power of writing as a tool against collective historical amnesia: “Everyone can forget us—as long as you remember.” Vietnamese Australian poet Nguyễn Tiên Hoàng in his poem “Homecoming with” returns to a Saigon that seems to have forgotten the war: “War is a word I could not form—or did I refuse to utter?” Even for second-generation Vietnamese American poets like Diana Khoi Nguyen, the wounds left by war and its aftermath are still felt keenly. In “I Keep Getting Things Wrong,” the iconic newsreel-like image of the end of the war is captured with photographic vividness, the moment so fraught, so heightened it seems frozen:

My father, just  
out of his teens, stands on the rooftop  
of the embassy in Saigon, his birthplace.  
He gives his hand to his mother,  
and all around them, a thousand hands reach up

not to wave. None of his siblings died.  
Their bodies like a fine chain balled tight  
in a fist. They made it out alive.  
Why is he looking at me like this?

The kinetic image resembles a freeze frame, the father's gaze conveyed in the question bridging the distance in time and space, and draws the daughter into the memory of war and postwar trauma.

Diasporic offspring, or second and successive generation poets, often hybrids with composite and hyphenated identities and having access to two or more cultures, often embark on a quest journey to their parents or ancestors' homeland, to discover or rather rediscover what has been lost in the process of migration and settlement. Unclassifiable at home, and often targets of racism whether conscious or unconscious, these poets of mixed parentage and cultures inhabit an in-between space where questions of belonging and identity demand constant negotiation. Lachlan Brown, who sees himself mirrored in the eyes of Australian whites as a "mashed-potato-fried-rice-vigour-half-caste" ("Filling Out a Form"), goes to seek out his Chinese roots in "(grandmothercountry)," only to find modernizing globalisation has erased so much of the past he was hoping to find: "First night in Kaiping centre and China repeats itself. / The same HK chain stores sit over Bruce Lee's Kung-Fu eatery, which is roundhouse kicking a KFC where . . ." In another

poem “(life-hyphen),” Brown sums up with memorable economy and resonance the doubleness, the duality of perspective and being that hybrid diasporic offspring like him experiences:

The way you don't know (what) you are in Australia until someone yells out 'Fucken gook' from the bus window is the way you don't notice the Guangzhou rain falling until you look up and it has slicked over everything and you find your skin wet and trembling but the light's polished grey modulations mean people stop double-taking at your distortion-pedal face just long enough for you to get past them.

In England, Will Harris too experiences interrogative looks, the duality of his identity exacerbated by the uncertain and often racist response to his Asian appearance, which contradicts his English name and speech. Like Brown, the ambiguity and ambivalence of his position are exacerbated, not resolved, by the trip to Indonesia in “Mother's Country.” There is little or no sense of homecoming and arrival as the plane approaches, the distant, detached views of Jakarta reflecting no affiliation or identification, and little hope of resolving the complex issues of belonging and identity.

The new wave of diasporic poets has inherited the same issues of racism and prejudice that first-generation poets like Sunil Govinnage deals with, who writes damningly of marginalisation and exclusion from the Australian literary mainstream: “My English verses / Will never appear in an anthology / Of new *Australian Verse* by Peter Porter” (“My English Verses”). In the global transnational age, younger poets are attuned to multicultural cosmopolitanism that globalisation has brought about and adopt transcultural strategies of

negotiating the shifting borderzones they find themselves in, between countries, cultures and languages. Maryam Azam's transcultural and adaptive poetics playfully evokes the various transformations of her community's cultural and religious dress-code in the wider context of Sydney's multicultural milieu in "A Brief Guide to Hijab Fashion." Adopting a similar defamiliarisation strategy in "Places I've Prayed," she takes Islam out of the mosque and performs her prayers in a ladies' room at the Opera House, in "a Westfield parking lot" and in a cineplex "on George Street." Azam's bold urban poetics is also practised by Imtiaz Dharker in "Medium," where the polyphonic global village has changed the urbanscapes of London:

Across the coffee-shop, baristas  
are calling out to one another in Malayalam,  
coffee burbles in Spanish,  
the streets are a torrent of passing Italian,  
windows fly open on Punjabi, doors  
bang in Swahili, cars go by in a rush  
of German, screens flash off and on  
in Russian, mobile phones shout Mandarin,  
the school playground is screaming Sylheti.  
Even songbirds are chirping in accents,  
Valleys, Geordie, Bhojpuri.

Culinary motifs, carrying distinctive ethnic flavours, are a staple in Asian diasporic writing, evoking the relationship between food, memory and identity. Cooking and eating, gustatory and alimentary images and motifs provide visceral, atavistic links to the past, betokening the migrant's resistance to assimilation, loss, and allowing the possibility of living in difference. But food also

enables acts of border-crossing, and facilitates diversity and plurality. Maya Chowdhry's poetic cartography in "The City of Culture" transforms Glasgow through a culinary inventory:

Rajah Dhaniya, Haldi, Jeera, Mirch  
Bolst Curry Powder and Tikka Paste  
neighbouring Norfolk Sage and Stuffing Mix  
Khyber Guaranteed Pure Vegetable Ghee bordering  
Ambrosia Creamed Rice Mangal Tea Masala mingling  
with Typhoo Imperial Savoury Snacks and Karela in Brine flanking  
Bachelors Mushy Peas

This medley of names and objects enacts a spatial poetics that turns Glasgow into a global village, scrambling the near and far, blurring cultural and geographic boundaries while acknowledging the networks of movement and crossings triggered by colonialism. Seni Seneviratne also captures the irony of looking for her roots in the cinnamon she cooks with, from "pre-packed jars" ("Cinnamon Roots"), a Sri Lankan spice which has found its way to Britain through a history of Dutch and British imperialism and colonialism. Place and home have ceased to be a matter of being tethered to a single location with stable or fixed markers but are translated through a transcultural and transnational poetics. Many of the poets and poems gathered here offer lessons in imaginative cartography, redrawing maps, enriching, reinvigorating and transforming the physical, cultural and literary landscapes of their diasporic homes, as well as the ancestral home in Asia.

Tracking the development of Asian diasporic poetry from the first wave of diasporic poets who established their reputations in the 1980s, to second and successive generations, one can discern that key preoccupations, like migration, cultural memory and loss, home, family,

racism and prejudice, still hold currency, and postcolonial themes of language and identity, which poets from Asian countries with colonial histories wrestle with, remain pertinent. But there seems to be an increased wariness of identity politics, and of the stereotypes and clichés that have come to be associated with diasporic Asian literature. Timothy Yu in “Chinese Silence No. 12” and John Yau in “Ing Grish” are derisive of these oriental clichés fed to American readers while Kimiko Hahn mocks the institution of Asian American literature as an academic subject, and illustrates its unteachability in “Asian American Lit. Final.” These three poets have shown through their own practice that Asian diasporic poetry does not have to be rooted in autobiographical, narrative or lyric modes, that the poets can articulate their position as Asian and American through oblique, elliptical and experimental strategies. In the US, Bhanu Kapil, Timothy Yu, John Yau and Myung Mi Kim spearhead experimental poets subversive of the conventions and expectations of Asian American literature, while in Australia, Adam Aitken, Ivy Alvarez, Gita Mammen and Bella Li eschew identity politics through strategies of obliquity and cosmopolitanism; in Europe, Wong May, Jane Yeh, Rishi Dastidar and Fiona Sze-Lorrain are boldly original, ironic, subversive and unpredictable.

As with any genre or literary formation, diasporic Asian poetry in each region has its own generational shifts, and dialogic and agonistic relationships that bind poets to the mainstream tradition. While preserving or keeping in earshot the accents of their mother tongue or natal voice, first-generation writers are also steeped in the adoptive language and literature in a quest to create and define their own voice. One can discern the creative engagement Li-Young Lee has had with Ralph Waldo Emerson, Shirley Geok-lin Lim with William Carlos Williams, Timothy Yu with his near contemporary

Billy Collins, Ocean Vuong with Walt Whitman. There are also within the Asian diasporic formation discernible intra- and inter-generational links between older or first-generation poets and younger ones. As with any literary tradition there are lineages, influences and threads, and there are also fractures, criticism and rebellion. The generation of Asian American poets who received the first official recognition in the field in the 1980s paved the way for the current generation whose works are now perhaps more readily absorbed into the literary mainstream. The 1980s was a seminal decade for writers of Asian provenance in the Anglo-American world, not just in fiction (in 1981 Salman Rushdie won the Booker and Maxine Hong Kingston the National Book Award), but also for poetry—Shirley Geok-lin Lim won the Commonwealth Poetry Prize in 1980; Cathy Song won the Yale Series of Younger Poets Award in 1982; Li-Young Lee won the Delmore Schwarz Memorial Prize for his debut *Rose* in 1986. The Walt Whitman Award has been given to three Asian poets: Suji Kwock Kim (2002), Mai Der Vang (2016) and Jenny Xie (2017). In 2017, Ocean Vuong received the T.S. Eliot Prize, which Sarah Howe had won the year before. From the 80s generation, whose themes were grounded in narratives of migration and family, to the millennial generation of new Asian American poets who, as Victoria Chang notes in her introduction to *Asian American Poetry: The Next Generation*, “have captured the power of the past but have ventured into new territories and discovered, created, and revealed new voices and styles,” there are clear, deep lines of continuity, of influence and inheritance, as well as breaks and fractures, antithetical and revisionary moments, as evidenced by the elusive, elliptical, postmodern styles and voices, like that of Bhanu Kapil, John Yau, Timothy Yu, Myung Mi Kim and Wendy Xu. One can argue that without Li-Young Lee, there might not have been Ocean Vuong.



This anthology aims to give tracking snapshots of the developments of Asian diasporic poetry in each of the three territories and to offer a global comparative view of their trajectories. Asian American poetry has led the way and shown their counterparts in the UK and Australia how it could hold its own against the mainstream American canon, sit just inside its ambit and yet preserve its distinct identity; it is, to use Shirley Geok-lin Lim's words, an "exemplar of living in difference" (*The Forbidden Stitch* 10). Anthologies of Asian American literature started appearing regularly from the 1980s on, building on the work done by the pioneering 1974 anthology *Aiiieeeee! An Anthology of Asian-American Writers*, and critical studies like Elaine Kim's 1982 *Asian American Literature: An Introduction to the Writings and Their Social Context* helped establish the growing body of Asian writers and works as a literary genre with its own critical industry. Australia had to wait till 2012 for its first Asian Australian anthology—*Contemporary Asian Australian Poets*—while the UK has not had anything as comprehensive and focussed; to date it has only *The Redbeck Anthology of British South Asian Poetry* (2000) edited by Debjani Chatterjee, and *Out of Bounds: British Black and Asian Poets* (2012). If literary awards can be used as indicators of acceptance and recognition, then the major literary awards won by poets of Asian origin or descent in Australia and the UK reflect how far both territories have come since the early 1980s, when hardly any Asian poets were being published in either territory. In 2018, Bella Li won the Victoria Premier's Literary Award and the NSW Premier's Literary Award with her experimental cross-disciplinary work *Argosy*; Eileen Chong and Adam Aitken were recently shortlisted for the Prime Minister's Literary Award for Poetry. Moniza Alvi received a Cholmondeley Award in 2002 and Imtiaz Dharker was awarded the Queen's Gold Medal for Poetry in

2014. Sarah Howe's T.S. Eliot Prize win in 2016 further reveals how Asian poetry is slowly catching up with the British Asian novel in carving a place for itself on the British literary landscape.

This anthology, working within the constraints of budget and space, attempts to capture the diverse range of voices and styles of Asian diasporic poetry, aiming for a balance of established poets and new voices. As we started scouting and curating, we were astonished at the diversity and range of the poetry across the three territories. As the project travelled, we found it impossible to encompass the plenitude of styles and multitude of voices, the sheer diversity and heterogeneity among the literary communities of Asian diaspora. The labels Asian American, Asian Australian and British Asian have proven inadequate, inherently flawed, as they have a homogenising effect and erase the difference and plurality of various Asian diasporic communities and histories, even in their hyphenated or compound form, rather than reflecting or capturing the complexity and irreducible difference of the Asian diaspora. The decision was made early to limit the selections to poets writing in English; diasporic poets writing in languages other than English, even if translated, deserve a separate anthology. Then, looking at the key categories we have chosen, we realised how geo-politically and historically challenging the idea of Asia was. Where are its boundaries? Should we consider Iran, Iraq and Central Asia? In the global age of transnational movement where actual and cultural borders have become porous and fluid, and when Asian diaspora has itself become globalised, it was a challenge to stake out the boundaries without trying to dictate what Asia should be. In the end, constraints of time and space led us to draw the lines closer, with the focus on South, and East and South-East Asia. Within these parameters one can see intersections and overlapping

circles, the movements of people, ideas and goods that go beyond nineteenth-century Asian diaspora, possibly further. Contemporary Asian diaspora is the late development in the narrative, and the poets assembled here are all writing it.

The Asian poets from America, Australia, England, Scotland, Ireland and France convened here are rewriting, challenging, and enriching their respective traditions, changing the poetry maps of each territory, providing new ways of looking at nation, culture, place and identity. But the looking is not merely inward; the poets' attention extends much further afield and one can see the Trans-Pacific and Trans-Atlantic traffic, the influences, correspondences, and the border-crossing of poetic ideas and themes. Their double and in some cases multiple perspectives reflect and refract Asia, the bifocal and stereoscopic gaze of their works juxtaposing America, Australia, UK and Europe with Asia in compelling, refreshing mappings. This transnational way of seeing and being has enriched and revised the reality and idea of Asia, complicating its meaning and revising its borders, real and imaginary, extending and deepening the global story of Asian diaspora.

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**A M E R I C A**

**OCEAN VUONG**

# Immigrant Haibun

*The road which leads me to you is safe  
even when it runs into oceans.*

Edmond Jabès

\*

Then, as if breathing, the sea swelled beneath us. If you must know anything, know that the hardest task is to live only once. That a woman on a sinking ship becomes a life raft—no matter how soft her skin. While I slept, he burned his last violin to keep my feet warm. He lay beside me and placed a word on the nape of my neck, where it melted into a bead of whiskey. Gold rust down my back. We had been sailing for months. Salt in our sentences. We had been sailing—but the edge of the world was nowhere in sight.

\*

When we left it, the city was still smoldering. Otherwise it was a perfect spring morning. White hyacinths gasped in the embassy lawn. The sky was September-blue and the pigeons went on pecking at bits of bread scattered from the bombed bakery. Broken baguettes. Crushed croissants. Gutted cars. A carousel spinning its blackened horses. He said the shadow of missiles growing larger on the sidewalk looked like god playing an air piano above us. He said *There is so much I need to tell you.*

\*

Stars. Or rather, the drains of heaven—waiting. Little holes. Little centuries opening just long enough for us to slip through. A machete on the deck left out to dry. My back turned to him. My feet in the eddies. He crouches beside me, his breath a misplaced weather. I let him cup a handful of the

sea into my hair and wring it out. *The smallest pearls—and all for you.* I open my eyes. His face between my hands, wet as a cut. *If we make it to shore,* he says, *I will name our son after this water. I will learn to love a monster.* He smiles. A white hyphen where his lips should be. There are seagulls above us. There are hands fluttering between the constellations, trying to hold on.

\*

The fog lifts. And we see it. The horizon—suddenly gone. An aqua sheen leading to the hard drop. Clean and merciful—just like he wanted. Just like the fairy tales. The one where the book closes and turns to laughter in our laps. I pull the mast to full sail. He throws my name into the air. I watch the syllables crumble into pebbles across the deck.

\*

Furious roar. The sea splitting at the bow. He watches it open like a thief staring into his own heart: all bones and splintered wood. Waves rising on both sides. The ship encased in liquid walls. *Look!* he says, *I see it now!* He's jumping up and down. He's kissing the back of my wrist as he clutches the wheel. He laughs but his eyes betray him. He laughs despite knowing he has ruined every beautiful thing just to prove beauty cannot change him. And here's the kicker: there's a cork where the sunset should be. It was always there. There's a ship made from toothpicks and superglue. There's a ship in a wine bottle on the mantel in the middle of a Christmas party—eggnog spilling from red Solo cups. But we keep sailing anyway. We keep standing at the bow. A wedding-cake couple encased in glass. The water so still now. The water like air, like hours. Everyone's shouting or singing and he can't tell whether the song is for him—or the burning rooms he mistook for childhood. Everyone's dancing while a tiny man and woman are stuck inside a green bottle thinking someone is waiting at the end of their lives to say *Hey! You didn't have to go this far. Why did you go so far?* Just as a baseball bat crashes through the world.



\*

If you must know anything, know that you were born because no one else was coming. The ship rocked as you swelled inside me: love's echo hardening into a boy. Sometimes I feel like an ampersand. I wake up waiting for the crush. Maybe the body is the only question an answer can't extinguish. How many kisses have we crushed to our lips in prayer—only to pick up the pieces? If you must know, the best way to understand a man is with your teeth. Once, I swallowed the rain through a whole green thunderstorm. Hours lying on my back, my girlhood open. The field everywhere beneath me. How sweet. That rain. How something that lives only to fall can be nothing but sweet. Water whittled down to intention. Intention into nourishment. Everyone can forget us—as long as you remember.

\*

Summer in the mind.  
God opens his other eye:  
two moons in the lake.

**AUSTRALIA**

**EUNICE ANDRADA**

# (because I am a daughter) of diaspora

and by default –  
an open sea,  
what language will not meet me  
with rust?

They convince my mother  
her voice is a selfish tide,  
claiming words that are not meant  
for her,

this roiling carcass of ocean  
making ragdolls of our foreign  
limbs.

In the end  
our brown skin  
married to seabed.

When I return to the storm  
of my islands  
with a belly full of first world,  
I wrangle the language I grew up with  
yet still have to rehearse.  
I play with the familiar rattle of consonants  
on my tongue and do not think myself  
a serpent.

By the street corner, a man in rags  
speaks to me in practised English.

*Where are you going?*

I don't respond,  
the words a recognition  
of the mongrel flag  
I call my face.  
I want to say to him, *We are the same.*  
*Pareho lang po tayo.*  
My bleached accent,  
the dollars in my wallet  
sing another anthem.

*How long have you been here?*

*How long are you staying?*

I am above water, holding  
onto a country that drowns  
with or without me.

**UK & EUROPE**

**IMTIAZ DHARKER**

# Call

So many voices, throwing floodlights  
on our lives.  
My hand shields the phone.  
After all the clatter and the shouting  
I stand alone, in the small space  
made by the candle that is your voice,  
trying to open a window back to home.

Everywhere, the noise,  
the sound of tills, traffic,  
sirens, electric drills.  
Even the birdsong  
has a different accent,  
hustling the day along.  
I came here to stand still,  
after weeks of hesitating  
at other people's doors,  
seeing their lives in lighted windows,  
looking in at basements, at dinner  
being made, smelling the food,  
all the tables laid.

I measure out your voice in seconds.

I have rung to see  
if our tamarind tree is still there,  
where my brothers are,  
because home moved house  
to bring me here,  
and faces crumpled with the years.



Fields shifted  
further and closer with the drift  
of light and shade, and the seasons  
made different clothes for me,

heavy, weighed down by wool.  
And you are sitting alone  
in a room in a house in another country.

# CONTRIBUTORS

**AMERICA**

**Meena Alexander** was an award-winning poet and scholar. Her eighth book of poetry *Atmospheric Embroidery* (TriQuarterly Books/ Northwestern University Press) was published in June 2018. She was Distinguished Professor of English at The Graduate Centre / Hunter College, City University of New York. Meena passed away in November 2018. A posthumous book of Meena's poems, *In Praise of Fragments*, is being published by Nightboat Books (New York) in February 2020.

**Agha Shahid Ali**, a Kashmiri-American, was born on February 4, 1949, in New Delhi and grew up in Kashmir. He was awarded Guggenheim and Ingram-Merrill fellowships and a Pushcart Prize, and his collection *Rooms Are Never Finished* was a finalist for the National Book Award in 2001. Agha Shahid Ali passed away on December 8, 2001.

**Rick Barot** was born in the Philippines, grew up in the San Francisco Bay Area. He has published three books of poetry: *The Darker Fall* (2002), *Want* (2008), and *Chord* (2015). *Chord* received the 2016 UNT Rilke Prize, the PEN Open Book Award, and the Thom Gunn Award. He has received fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, and Stanford University. He lives in Tacoma, Washington and directs The Rainier Writing Workshop, the low-residency MFA in Creative Writing at Pacific Lutheran University. His fourth book of poems, *The Galleons*, is forthcoming in 2020.

**Nick Carbó** (1964) was born in Legazpi, Albany, Philippines. He was adopted at an early age by a Spanish couple Alfonso and Sophie. He grew up in Makati, Metro Manila and attended the International School of Manila (2-12). He earned his MFA in Creative Writing from Sarah Lawrence College (1992). He also spent a year ('08-'09) in the PhD Poetry Program at the University of Manchester, UK. His four books of poetry are *Chinese, Japanese, What Are These?* (2009); *Andalusian Dawn* (2004); *Secret Asian Man* (2000); *El Grupo McDonald's* (1995). Among his awards are fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts (1997) and the New York Foundation for the Arts (1999).

**Victoria Chang's** new book of poems, *OBIT*, will be published by Copper Canyon Press in April 2020. *Love, Love*, a middle grade verse novel will be published by Sterling Publishing in April 2020. Her book of essays, *The Terrible Crystals*, is forthcoming from Milkweed Editions. Other books of poems are *Barbie Chang*, *The Boss*, *Salvinia Molesta* and *Circle*. Her children's picture book, *Is Mommy?*, was illustrated by Marla Frazee and published by Beach Lane Books/Simon & Schuster. It was named a *New York Times* Notable Book. She has received a Guggenheim Fellowship, a Sustainable Arts Foundation Fellowship, the Poetry Society of America's Alice Fay Di Castagnola Award, a Pushcart Prize, a MacDowell Fellowship, and a Lannan Residency Fellowship. She serves on the Board of the National Book Critics Circle. She serves as the program chair for Antioch's low-residency MFA program in creative writing. She lives in Los Angeles with her family.

**Marilyn Chin** was born in Hong Kong and grew up in Oregon, in the U.S. Northwest. She is the author of the poetry collections *The Phoenix Gone*, *The Terrace Empty* (1994), *Rhapsody in Plain Yellow* (2002), *Hard Love Province* (2014), winner of the Anisfield-Wolf Book Award, and *A Portrait of the Self as Nation: New and Selected Poems* (2018). She is a Chancellor of the Academy of American Poets.

**Eric Chock** was born in Honolulu, Territory of Hawaii, USA. He co-founded Bamboo Ridge Press along with Darrell Lum in 1978. Chock has been a visiting distinguished writer at the University of Hawai'i-Manoa and Associate Professor of Humanities at the University of Hawai'i at West O'ahu.

**Kimiko Hahn**, author of nine books, finds that disparate sources have given way to her work—whether black lung disease in *Volatile*, Flaubert's sex-tour in *The Unbearable Heart*, exhumation in *The Artist's Daughter*, or classical Japanese forms in *The Narrow Road to the Interior*. Rarified fields of science prompted her latest collections *Toxic Flora* and *Brain Fever*. A new collection, *Foreign Bodies*, is forthcoming in 2020. Honours include a Guggenheim Fellowship, PEN/Voelcker Award, and Shelley Memorial Prize. Hahn is a distinguished professor in the MFA Program in Creative Writing & Literary Translation at Queens College, City University of New York.

**Bhanu Kapil** is the author of five books, most recently *Ban En Banlieue* (Nightboat Books, 2016). She also has a blog, The Vortex of Formidable Sparkles. Born in the UK to Indian (Punjabi) parents, she now lives in the US.

**Myung Mi Kim's** books include *Civil Bound*, *Penury*, *Commons*, *DURA*, and *Under Flag*, winner of the Multicultural Publisher's Exchange Award. She has received fellowships and honours from the Djerassi Resident Artists Program, Gertrude Stein Awards for Innovative North American Poetry, and the Fund for Poetry. Kim is James H. McNulty Chair of English at the University at Buffalo, State University of New York.

**Suji Kwock Kim** is the author of *Notes from the Divided Country*, which won the Walt Whitman Award from the Academy of American Poets, the Addison Metcalf Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the Whiting Writer's Award, the Bay Area Book Reviewers Award, and was a finalist for the Griffin International Prize; *Private Property*, a play produced at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe; *Notes from the North*, a chapbook which won the 2019 International Book & Pamphlet Competition; and *Disorient* (forthcoming). She is the recipient of three awards from the Poetry Society of America, as well as grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, Association for Asian Studies, Korea Foundation, Japan Foundation, Munster Literature Centre (Ireland), Hawthornden Foundation (Scotland), and Fondation Ledig-Rowohl (Switzerland). She is a 2019–2020 Poet-in-Residence at the Wordsworth Trust, UK.

**Li-Young Lee** was born in 1957 in Jakarta, Indonesia. His verse has earned numerous honours, including a Lannan Literary Award, a Paterson Poetry Prize, and an American Book Award. Lee lives in Chicago with his wife and two sons.

**Shirley Geok-lin Lim's** *Crossing the Peninsula* won the Commonwealth Poetry Prize, first for a woman and Asian. She's received two American Book awards, the second for her memoir *Among the White Moon Faces*. Recipient of the Multiethnic Literatures of the United States Lifetime Achievement Award and University of California Santa Barbara Faculty Research Lecture Award, she's published ten poetry and three short story collections; two novels (*Joss and Gold* and *Sister Swing*); a children's novel, *Princess Shawl*; *The Shirley Lim Collection*, and edited numerous anthologies and critical texts. Her work has been translated into Chinese, Bahasa, Russian, Spanish, and other languages. She served as Chair Professor of English at University of Hong Kong and the Inaugural Ngee Ann Professor at National University of Singapore.

**Wing Tek Lum** is a Honolulu businessman and poet. Bamboo Ridge Press has published his two collections of poetry: *Expounding the Doubtful Points* (1987) and *The Nanjing Massacre: Poems* (2012).

**Diana Khoi Nguyen**'s debut collection, *Ghost Of* (Omnidawn, 2018), was selected by Terrance Hayes for the Omnidawn Open Contest. In addition to winning the 92Y "Discovery" / Boston Review Poetry Contest and being a finalist for both the National Book Award and 2019 Kate Tufts Discovery Award, she is a PhD candidate in creative writing at the University of Denver.

Born in India, **Vijay Seshadri** came to the USA at the age of five. He is the author of *Wild Kingdom* (1996); *The Long Meadow* (2003), which won the James Laughlin Award; and *3 Sections* (2013), which won the Pulitzer Prize in Poetry. He has worked as an editor at *The New Yorker* and currently teaches at Sarah Lawrence College.

**Cathy Song** is the author of *Picture Bride* (1982 Yale Series of Younger Poets), *Frameless Windows*, *Squares of Light*, *School Figures*, *The Land of Bliss* and *Cloud Moving Hands*. Widely anthologised, her poems have appeared in *The Norton Anthology of Modern Poetry* and *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*. Her awards include the Shelley Memorial Award (Poetry Society of America), a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship, a Pushcart Prize and the Hawai'i Award for Literature. Born and raised on the island of Oahu where she has spent most of her life, she divides her time between Honolulu and Volcano, Hawai'i.



**Sokunthary Svay** was born in a refugee camp in Thailand shortly after her parents fled Cambodia after the fall of the Khmer Rouge regime. They resettled in the Bronx where she grew up. She is poetry editor for *Newtown Literary*, founding member of the Cambodian American Literary Arts Association (CALAA), the recipient of the American Opera Projects' Composer and the Voice Fellowship for 2017-19, and the 2018 Emerging Poets Fellowship at Poets House. Her poetry collection, *Apsara in New York*, is available from Willow Books. She is currently a doctoral student in English at The Graduate Centre, CUNY. Her opera libretto, *Woman of Letters*, commissioned by the Washington National Opera, will receive its premiere at the Kennedy Center in January 2020.

**Arthur Sze** has published ten books of poetry, including *Sight Lines* (Copper Canyon, 2019), *Compass Rose*, *The Ginkgo Light*, *Quipu*, and *The Redshifting Web: Poems 1970-1998*, as well as *The Silk Dragon: Translations from the Chinese*. A recipient of the Jackson Poetry Prize from Poets & Writers, two National Endowment for the Arts fellowships, a Guggenheim Fellowship, a Lannan Literary Award, an American Book Award, and a Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Writers' Award, Sze is a professor emeritus at the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, New Mexico. He was a Chancellor of the Academy of American Poets from 2012-2017, and was recently elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

**Bryan Thao Worra** is the Lao Minnesotan Poet Laureate. He is a 2009 US National Endowment for the Arts Fellow in Literature and a 2019 Joyce Fellow. He holds over 20 awards for his writing and community leadership. He is featured in over 100 international publications and textbooks. The author of over eight books, he is the Creative Works Editor for the *Journal of Southeast Asian American Education and Advancement*, and is the president of a 40-year old international poetry association. In 2012, he represented the nation of Laos as its Cultural Olympian during the London Summer Games.

**Pimone Triplett** is the author of four book-length collections of poetry. Her most recent publication is entitled *Supply Chain*, and she is also the author of the poetry volumes *Rumor*, *The Price of Light*, and *Ruining the Picture*. With the poet Dan Tobin, she is a co-editor of *Poet's Work*, *Poet's Play*, a collection of craft essays from faculty teaching at the low-residency MFA program Warren Wilson. Her poems have appeared in such nationally recognised literary journals such as *American Poetry Review*, *New England Review*, *Virginia Quarter*, *Denver Quarter* and the *Iowa Review*. She currently teaches creative writing at the University of Washington MFA program in Seattle.

**Bunkong Tuon** is a Cambodian-American writer, critic, and teacher. He is the author of three poetry collections: *Gruel* (NYQ Books, 2015), *And So I Was Blessed* (NYQ Books, 2017), and *The Doctor Will Fix It* (Shabda Press, 2019). His poetry recently won the 2019 Nasiona Nonfiction Poetry Prize. He teaches at Union College, in Schenectady, NY.

**Mai Der Vang** is the author of *AFTERLAND* (Graywolf Press, 2017), recipient of the Walt Whitman Award of the Academy of American Poets. She teaches in the MFA Creative Writing Program at Fresno State.

**Ocean Vuong** is the author of the debut novel *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous* and the critically acclaimed poetry collection *Night Sky with Exit Wounds*, winner of the Whiting Award and the T. S. Eliot Prize. His writings have also been featured in *The Atlantic*, *Harper's*, *The Nation*, *New Republic*, *The New Yorker*, and *The New York Times*. Born in Saigon, Vietnam, he currently lives in Northampton, Massachusetts.

**Jenny Xie** is the author of *Eye Level* (Graywolf Press, 2018), finalist for the National Book Award in Poetry, and recipient of the Walt Whitman Award of the Academy of American Poets and the Holmes National Poetry Prize from Princeton University. Her chapbook, *Nowhere to Arrive* (Northwestern University Press, 2017) received the Drinking Gourd Prize. She is on faculty at New York University and lives in New York.

**Wendy Xu** is a poet born in Shandong, China, and based in New York City. She is most recently the author of *Phrasis* (Fence Books), one of the *New York Times Book Review's* 10 Best Poetry Books of 2017. Her work has appeared in *Tin House*, *The Best American Poetry*, *Boston Review*, *Poetry*, and widely elsewhere.

**John Yau** was awarded the 2018 Jackson Prize in Poetry. He is the author of many books of poetry, fiction, and art criticism. His most recent books are *Bijoux in the Dark* (Letter Machine Editions, 2018), a collection of art reviews, *The Wild Children of William Blake* (Autonomedia, 2017), a monograph on *Philip Taaffe* (2018), and a collaboration with Trevor Winkfield, *Annals of a Gumshoe* (Smoke Specs, 2019). A book of essays, *Foreign Sounds or Sounds Foreign*, is forthcoming from MadHat in 2020. His work has been translated into French, Portuguese, Chinese, and Russian. He lives in New York.

**Timothy Yu** is the author of *100 Chinese Silences* and of three chapbooks of poetry: *15 Chinese Silences*, *Journey to the West* (winner of the Vincent Chin Chapbook Prize from Kundiman) and, with Kristy Odellius, *Kiss the Stranger*. He is professor of English and Asian American studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He can be found at [timpanyu.com](http://timpanyu.com).

**AUSTRALIA**

**Adam Aitken** was born in London, spent early childhood in Thailand and Malaysia, and now lives in Sydney. He is the author of five full length collections of poetry and a doctorate on the Asian Imaginary in Australian literature. He co-edited the *Contemporary Asian Australian Poets* anthology in 2013, with poetry and essays appearing in *Macquarie PEN Anthology of Australian Literature*, *Best Australian Poems*, *Transnational Literature*, *Poetryinternational.org* and *Contemporary Australian Poetry*. His memoir *One Hundred Letters Home* (Vagabond Press) appeared in 2016. *Archipelago*, was shortlisted for the Kenneth Slessor Poetry Award and the Prime Minister's Literature Prize in 2018.

**Ivy Alvarez's** poetry collections include *The Everyday English Dictionary*, *Disturbance*, and *Mortal*, with her latest, *Diaspora: Volume L*, published in April 2019 (Paloma Press). A three-time Pushcart Prize nominee, her work is widely published and anthologised, featuring in *Best Australian Poems* twice and in *Bonsai: Best Small Stories from Aotearoa NZ*. Several of her poems are translated into Russian, Spanish, Japanese and Korean. In 2017, she became an international editor for the first NZ edition of *Atlanta Review* (US). Born in the Philippines and raised in Australia, she lived almost a decade in Wales before moving to New Zealand in 2014. [www.ivyalvarez.com](http://www.ivyalvarez.com)

**Eunice Andrada** is a Filipina poet, teaching artist and performer. Her debut poetry collection *Flood Damages* (Giramondo Books, 2018) won the Anne Elder Award (2018) and was shortlisted for the Victorian Premier's Literary Award for Poetry (2019). Her work has been translated and performed in Tagalog, Hiligaynon, French, Japanese, Italian, Spanish and Czech, while her poems have appeared in numerous international journals and anthologies. Her previous works were awarded the John Marsden & Hachette Australia Poetry Prize (2014) and shortlisted for the Fair Australia Prize (2018). She has performed her poetry in diverse international stages, from the Sydney Opera House to the UN Climate Negotiations in Paris.

**Mona Zahra Attamimi** is Arab Indonesian. She lived as a child in Jakarta, Washington DC and Manila, before settling in Australia at age nine. She has been published in *Southerly*, *Meanjin*, *Westerly*, and in the *Contemporary Asian Australian Poets* anthology. She has read her poetry at regular events, performed at the Sydney Writers' Festival, and translated Indonesian poetry. Currently she lives with her partner and daughters in Sydney.

**Maryam Azam** is a Pakistani-Australian writer and teacher in Western Sydney. She graduated with Honours in Creative Writing from Western Sydney University and holds a diploma in the Islamic Sciences. She is the recipient of a WestWords Emerging Writers' Fellowship and a member of SWEATSHOP: Western Sydney Literacy Movement. Her debut poetry collection is *The Hijab Files* (Giramondo, 2018).

**Merlinda Bobis** is a trilingual Filipino-Australian writer, performer, and scholar. She published four novels, six poetry books, a collection of short stories, a monograph of lectures on creative research and had ten dramatic works performed/produced in Australia, Philippines, US, Canada, Spain, Singapore, China, France, Slovakia and Thailand. Her works won various awards including the Steele Rudd Australian Short Story Award, the Christina Stead Prize for Fiction, the Prix Italia for Radio Fiction and the Philippine National Book Award. Her sixth poetry book *Accidents of Composition* was Highly Commended for the 2018 ACT Book of the Year.

**Lachlan Brown** lives in Wagga Wagga where he is a senior lecturer in English at Charles Sturt University. He is the author of two volumes of poetry, *Lunar Inheritance* (Giramondo, 2017) and *Limited Cities* (Giramondo, 2012). Lachlan's poems have appeared in journals including *Rabbit*, *Cordite*, *Cha*, *Kitaab*, and the *St Mark's Review*.

**Michelle Cahill** is a Sydney poet. Her short fiction *Letter to Pessoa* won the UTS Glenda Adams Award in the NSW Premier's Literary Award for New Writing and was shortlisted in the Steele Rudd Queensland Literary Awards. She won the Val Vallis Award, the Hilary Mantel International Short Story Prize and was shortlisted in the *ABR* Elizabeth Jolley Prize. She was a Fellow at Kingston Writing School, a Visiting Scholar in Creative Writing at UNC, Charlotte and a Fellow at Hawthornden Castle. Her poems have appeared in *Poetry Ireland Review*, *The London Magazine*, *HEAT* and *The Kenyon Review*.

**Eileen Chong** is the author of eight books. She is published by George Braziller in New York, USA, and by Pitt Street Poetry in Sydney, Australia. Her work has been shortlisted for several awards, including twice for the Australian Prime Minister's Literary Awards. She lives and works in Sydney, Australia.

**Ec Tiang Hong** (1933–1990) was born in Malacca, educated in both Malacca and Singapore, and committed his life to writing and education. In 1975, he migrated to Perth with his family, and became a lecturer in Education at the Western Australian College of Advanced Education. As one of the first generation of writers in English in Malaya, his critical work and poetry contributed to the evolution of her literary landscape.

**Dr. Sunil Govinnage** was born in Sri Lanka and migrated to Australia in 1988. He has been writing poetry in Sinhala since 1965 and in English since 1989. Govinnage has worked as a full-time civil servant in Western Australia since December 1988 to 2014. Govinnage has published seven collections of poetry. His English poetry has been read in Australia, Canada, Hungary, India, Malaysia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, and the USA and published in Australia, Canada, India, Singapore, Sri Lanka, the UK, and the USA.

**Louise Ho** spent her early years in Cantonese-speaking Hong Kong and French-speaking Mauritius; continued schooling, then university, etc. in Hong Kong, U.K., U.S.A. Since the 70's her poetry has appeared in international journals, anthologies and books. She retired from the Chinese University of Hong Kong where she lectured on English/ American Poetry and Shakespeare. Her *Collected Poems (Incense Tree)* was published by Hong Kong University Press in 2009. She has lived in Australia, on and off, for about 18 years.



**Bella Li** is the author of *Argosy* (Vagabond Press, 2017), which won the 2018 Victorian Premier's Literary Award for Poetry and the 2018 NSW Premier's Literary Award for Poetry. Her second book, *Lost Lake* (Vagabond Press, 2018), was shortlisted for the 2018 QLD Literary Award for Poetry. Her writing and artwork have been published in journals and anthologies such as *Best Australian Poems*, *The Kenyon Review* and *Archives of American Art Journal*.

**Debbie Lim** is a Chinese-Australian writer born in Sydney. Her poems have appeared in numerous anthologies including regularly in the *Best Australian Poems* series (Black Inc.), in *Contemporary Asian Australian Poets* (Puncher & Wattmann) and *Contemporary Australian Poetry* (Puncher & Wattmann). She was commended in the Poetry Society UK's National Poetry Competition 2013 and has received the Rosemary Dobson Award (2009) among others. Her chapbook, *Beastly Eye*, was published by Vagabond Press in 2012.

**Miriam** writes to explore beauty and to probe the gap between what is and what should be. Her poems have been included in many anthologies and in the 2019 HSC syllabus for New South Wales. Her most recent publication, with Margaret River Press, is for children: *Bree's Forest Adventure*. She lives in Western Australia with her family and teaches creative writing at Sheridan College.

Writer and artist **Gita Mammen** is concerned with the familiar. Family whimsy, gritty urban pathos, or wartime spirituality, her narrative is surreal, straddling time-periods and locations. Gita has one poetry collection, *Feefafafaluda* (Five Islands Press, 2006), and two image-and-poetry artist books, *Lode-Rust* (2004) and *Feverfew* (2015), held in national and state library collections. A 2016 poetry fellowship at the Vermont Studio Center, US furthered her latest cross-medium project. Gita's poems have appeared in *Australian Poetry*, *Cordite*, *Contemporary Asian Australian Poets*, *Ekleksographia*, *Etchings*, *Hecate*, *Motherlode-Australian Women's Poetry 1986-2008*, *Prayers of a Secular World* and *Southerly*. Gita lives in Melbourne, Australia.

**Omar Musa** is a Malaysian-Australian author, rapper and poet from Queanbeyan, Australia. He has released four hip hop records, three poetry books (including *Parang* and *Millefiori*), appeared on ABC's Q&A and received a standing ovation at TEDx Sydney at the Sydney Opera House. His debut novel *Here Come the Dogs* was published by Penguin Australia in 2014 and was longlisted for the International Dublin Literary Award and Miles Franklin Award. Musa was named one of the Sydney Morning Herald's Young Novelists of the Year in 2015.

**Nguyễn Tiên Hoàng** is a Melbourne poet. He was born in Danang, Vietnam, arrived in Australia in 1974 under the Colombo Scholarship, has worked in radio broadcast and information technology. His poems appeared in the *Saturday Age*, *HEAT*, *Cordite*, *Peril*, Black Inc. Publishing anthologies of *Best Australian Poems*, *Poetry International* website, *Contemporary Asian-Australian Poets* anthology (Puncher & Wattmann, 2013) and *Contemporary Australian Poetry* (Puncher & Wattmann, 2016). His recent collection *Captive and Temporal* (Vagabond Press, 2017) was shortlisted for the Dame Mary Gilmore Poetry Prize and the Kenneth Slessor Poetry Prize 2018. Under the pen name Thường Quán he has published essays, poems and short stories on major Vietnamese literary journals inside and outside Vietnam. His most recent collection *Hải đảo, Trở lại* (Island, a Return) was published by AJAR Press, Hanoi in 2016.

By 2019, **Ouyang Yu**, a multi-award winner, has published 106 books in both English and Chinese in the field of fiction, nonfiction, poetry, literary translation and criticism. His second book of English poetry, *Songs of the Last Chinese Poet*, was shortlisted for the 1999 NSW Premier's Literary Award. His third novel, *The English Class*, won the 2011 NSW Premier's Award, and his translation in Chinese of *The Fatal Shore* by Robert Hughes won the Translation Award from the Australia-China Council in 2014. He is now professor of English at the Shanghai University of International Business and Economics, in China.

**Andy Quan** has lived in Sydney, Australia since 1999 where he works as a freelance editor. He was born in 1969 in Vancouver, Canada, third-generation Chinese-Canadian and fifth-generation Chinese-American with roots in the villages of Canton. He is the author of four books, the poetry collections *Bowling Pin Fire* and *Slant*, a book of short fiction, *Calendar Boy* and one of gay erotica, *Six Positions*. His fiction, poetry, sex writing and essays have appeared in over sixty anthologies, literary journals and magazines around the world. Visit him at: [www.andyquan.com](http://www.andyquan.com)

**UK & EUROPE**

**Shanta Acharya** was born and educated in India, won a scholarship to Oxford, and was among the first batch of women admitted to Worcester College in 1979. A recipient of the Violet Vaughan Morgan Fellowship, she was awarded the Doctor of Philosophy for her work on Ralph Waldo Emerson. She was a Visiting Scholar in the Department of English and American Literature and Languages at Harvard University before moving to work in London. The author of eleven books, her poems have appeared in major journals and anthologies. Her latest, *Imagine: New and Selected Poems*, was published by HarperCollins, 2017. [www.shantaacharya.com](http://www.shantaacharya.com)

**Moniza Alvi** was born in Lahore in 1954 to a Pakistani father and an English mother, and grew up in Hertfordshire. She has published nine poetry collections, two with Oxford University Press, and the others, with Bloodaxe Books. Three of her books have been shortlisted for the T.S. Eliot Prize. Her collection *At the Time of Partition* (Bloodaxe, 2013) is inspired by the partition of India and Pakistan and her family history. Her most recent collection *Blackbird, Bye Bye* (Bloodaxe, 2018), explores grief, immigration and art through an engagement with birds. Moniza received a Cholmondeley Award for poetry in 2002.

**Khairani Barokka** is an Indonesian writer and artist in London whose work has been presented extensively, in 15 countries. Barokka has received seven residencies; among her honours, she was an NYU Tisch Departmental Fellow, is a UNFPA Indonesian Young Leader Driving Social Change, and is *Modern Poetry in Translation's* Inaugural Poet-in-Residence. Okka is most recently co-editor of *Stairs and Whispers: D/deaf and Disabled Poets Write Back* (Nine Arches, 2017), author-illustrator of *Indigenous Species* (Tilted Axis, 2017), and author of *Rope* (Nine Arches, 2017). Her latest exhibition was *Annab: Nomenclature* (ICA, 2018). <http://www.khairanibarokka.com/>

**Mary Jean Chan** was born and raised in Hong Kong. She is the author of *A Hurry of English* (ignition, 2018), a Poetry Book Society Pamphlet Choice, and *Flèche* (Faber & Faber, 2019), her debut full-length collection, which is a Poetry Book Society Recommendation. She won second prize in the 2017 National Poetry Competition, and has been shortlisted in the Forward Prize Best Single Poem category twice. A Lecturer in Creative Writing (Poetry) at Oxford Brookes University, she lives in London.

**Debjeni Chatterjee**, MBE, FRSL, was born in India, grew up in many lands, and now lives in Sheffield, UK. Described as a ‘national treasure’ (Barry Tebb) and ‘Britain’s best known Asian poet’ (Elisabetta Marino), she has worked in industry, teaching, community relations and arts psychotherapy. An acclaimed international poet, children’s writer, translator, cancer survivor, Olympic torchbearer and storyteller, she chaired the National Association of Writers in Education and was Poet-in-Residence at Sheffield Children’s Hospital. She is a Royal Literary Fellow and Patron of Survivors’ Poetry. Her 65+ books include: *The Elephant-Headed God* and *Namaskar: New and Selected Poems*.  
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**Maya Chowdhry** is poet, inTer-aCtive artist and Transmedia writer. Her poetry collections are *The Seamstress and the Global Garment* (Crocus Press, 2006) and *Fossil* (Peepal Tree Press, 2016). She has won many accolades for her work—‘Butterfly Orchid’ was highly commended in the Forward Prizes, ‘Microbial Museum’ was Guardian poem of the week and she previously won the Cardiff International Poetry Competition. Her collaboration ‘Tales from the Towpath’ at Manchester Literature Festival was shortlisted for the 2014 New Media Writing Prize, and her digital poetic work ‘Ripple’ exploring anthropogenic climate change was shortlisted for the 2015 Dot Award.

**Rishi Dastidar's** poetry has been published by the BBC, *Financial Times*, *New Scientist*, Tate Modern and London's Southbank Centre amongst many others. His debut collection *Ticker-tape* is published in the UK by Nine Arches Press, a poem from which was included in *The Forward Book of Poetry 2018*.

**Imtiaz Dharker** is a poet and artist, awarded the Queen's Gold Medal for Poetry 2014. A Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, she has been Poet in Residence at Cambridge University Library and worked on several projects across art forms in Leeds, Newcastle and Hull, as well as the Archives of St Paul's Cathedral. Her six collections include *Over the Moon* and the latest, *Luck is the Hook*, and her poems have been broadcast widely on BBC Radio 3 and 4 as well as the BBC World Service. She also scripts and directs video films, and has had eleven solo exhibitions of drawings.

**Romesh Gunsekera** was born in Sri Lanka and lived in the Philippines before settling in Britain in the 1970s. He is internationally acclaimed for his poems, novels and short stories including the Booker-shortlisted *Reef*. His many awards include a Premio Mondello award in Italy and BBC's inaugural Asia Award in Britain. His poems have won awards and been anthologized in Britain and America. His writing has been translated into over a dozen languages. He is an elected Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature. [www.romeshgunsekera.com](http://www.romeshgunsekera.com)



**Will Harris** is a London-based poet and critic of mixed Chinese-Indonesian and English heritage. He is the author of the chapbook of poems, *All this is implied*, (HappenStance), and the essay *Mixed-Race Superman*, published by Peninsula Press in the UK and in an expanded edition by Melville House in the US. He was awarded a Poetry Fellowship from the Arts Foundation in 2019. His work has appeared in the *Guardian*, the *London Review of Books*, the *Poetry Review* and elsewhere. His first full poetry book, *RENDANG*, is forthcoming from Granta in 2020.

**Sarah Howe** is a British poet, academic and editor. Her first book, *Loop of Jade* (Chatto & Windus, 2015), won the T.S. Eliot Prize and The Sunday Times / PFD Young Writer of the Year Award. Born in Hong Kong to an English father and Chinese mother, she moved to England as a child. Her pamphlet, *A Certain Chinese Encyclopedia* (Tall-lighthouse, 2009), won an Eric Gregory Award from the Society of Authors. She has performed her work at festivals internationally and on BBC Radio 3 and 4. She is a Lecturer in Poetry at King's College London.

**Shamshad Khan** works as a coach in creative writing, resilience and inspired living. Based in Manchester (UK) she works with individuals and organisations to empower and engage. Her poetry collection *Megalomaniac*, published by Salt Publishing was studied on the Lancaster University English Literature degree course. Shamshad has toured internationally with her performances and collaborations with musicians and beatboxers. Her work has been featured on BBC "The Verb", at The National Review of Live Art, Glasgow and literature festivals from Mexico City to Mumbai. Shamshad co-wrote/directed the multi-media show *The Moonwatcher* (The Horse and Bamboo Puppet Theatre, 2018). Further information: <https://www.shamshadkhan.co.uk>

**Seni Seneviratne** is a writer, poet, performer, singer and multidisciplinary creative artist. She has collaborated with film-makers, visual artists, musicians and digital artists and is widely published. Her collections *Wild Cinnamon and Winter Skin* and *The Heart of It* are published by Peepal Tree Press. Her latest collection *Unknown Soldier* (Peepal Tree Press, 2019) is based on her father's experiences in North Africa in the Second World War. [www.seniseneviratne.com](http://www.seniseneviratne.com)

**Fiona Sze-Lorrain's** latest collection is *The Ruined Elegance* (Princeton, 2016). Also a widely published translator of contemporary Chinese, American, and French poetry, she lives in Paris.

Born in Chungking, China, **Wong May** was brought up in Singapore. After graduating from the University of Singapore, Wong May joined The Writers Workshop at the University of Iowa in 1966. Harcourt Bruce & World brought out her first book of poetry *A Bad Girl's Book of Animals* in 1969, followed by two other books in 1972 and 1978. *Picasso's Tears*, published by Octopus Books (USA), collects her poems from 1978 to 2013. Wong May has been living in Dublin since 1978. *173 Tang Poems for Our Century: Translations* was completed this year; currently she is working on *My Life in Pictures*, a book of portraiture with text.

**Jane Yeh** was born in America and has lived in London since 2002. Her first collection of poems, *Marabou* (Carcanet, 2005), was shortlisted for the Whitbread/Costa, Forward, and Aldeburgh poetry prizes. She was named a Next Generation poet by the Poetry Book Society for her second collection, *The Ninjas* (Carcanet, 2012). Her third collection, *Discipline* (Carcanet, 2019), is a Poetry Book Society Recommendation. She is a Lecturer in Creative Writing at the Open University.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**AMERICA**

**Meena Alexander:** “Port Sudan” from *Illiterate Heart*, Northwestern University Press (2002); “Experimental Geography” and “Birthplace with Buried Stones” from *Birthplace with Buried Stones*, Northwestern University Press (2013); “Kochi by the Sea” first published in *The New Yorker* (February 2018).

**Agha Shahid Ali:** “Postcard from Kashmir”, “A Lost Memory of Delhi”, “Prayer Rug” and “Vacating an Apartment” from *The Half-Inch Himalayas*, Wesleyan University Press (1987).

**Rick Barot:** “UDFJ-39546284”, “The Galleons 2”, “The Galleons 5”, “Marimar” and “The Galleons 10” from *The Galleons*, forthcoming from Milkweed Editions, Spring 2020.

**Nick Carbo:** “Little Brown Brother” from *El Grupo McDonald’s*, Tia Chucha (1995); “Ang Tunay Na Lalaki Goes Back in Time to May 1888” from *Secret Asian Man*, Cherry Grove Collections (2000); “Mal Agueros” and “Robo” from *Andalusian Dawn*, Cherry Grove Collections (2004).

**Victoria Chang:** “Five-Year Plan”, “Chinese Speech Contest”, and “Mostly Ocean” from *Circle*, Southern Illinois University Press (2005); “I Once Was a Child” from *The Boss*, McSweeney’s Publishing (2013).

**Marilyn Chin:** “Leaving San Francisco”, “Composed Near the Bay Bridge” and “Gruel” from *The Phoenix Gone, The Terrace Empty*, Milkweed Editions (2009).

**Eric Chock:** “Poem For My Father”, “Chinese Fireworks Banned in Hawaii”, “Home Free” and “Manoa Cemetery” from *Last Days Here*, Bamboo Ridge Press (1990).

**Kimiko Hahn:** “Asian American Lit. Final” from *The Narrow oad to the Interior*, W. W. Norton & Company (2008); “Alba” from *Toxic Flora*, W. W. Norton & Company (2010); “The Dream of a Lacquer Box” from *Brain Fever*, W. W. Norton & Company (2014); “Foreign Body” from *Poetry* (July/August 2017).

**Bhanu Kapil:** “Notes on Monsters: Section 2 (Wish)” from *Incubation: A Space for Monsters*, Leon Works (2006); “Humanimal [Feral children are fatty]” from *Humanimal*, Kelsey Street Press (2008); “India: Notebooks” from *Schizophrene*, Nightboat Books (2011).

**Myung Mi Kim:** “Under Flag” from *Under Flag*, Kelsey Street Press (1991); “Lamenta: 423” from *Commons*, University of California Press (2002); “From ‘Civil Bound’” first published in *Poetry* (July/August 2017) and appears in *Civil Bound*, Omnidawn (2019).

**Suji Kwock Kim:** “Translations from the Mother Tongue”, “Fragments of the Forgotten War” and “Nocturne” from *Notes from the Divided Country*, LSU Press (2003); “Rice-Field Road at Dusk” from *Poetry* (November 2014).

**Li-Young Lee:** “Early in the Morning” and “I Ask My Mother to Sing” from *Rose*, BOA Editions (1986); “My Father, in Heaven, Is Reading Out Loud” and “For a New Citizen of These United States” from *The City in Which I Love You*, BOA Editions (1990).

**Shirley Geok-lin Lim:** “Bukit China” and “Crossing the Peninsula” from *Monsoon History*, Skoob Books Pub Ltd (1995); “Riding into California” and “Immigrant” from *What the Fortune Teller Didn't Say*, West End Press (1998); “Keeping Your Distance” from *Walking Backwards: New Poems*, West End Press (2010).

**Wing Tek Lum:** “It’s Something Our Family Has Always Done”, “Translations” and “Grateful Here” from *Expounding the Doubtful Points*, Bamboo Ridge Press (1987); “Toiling in a Land of Purgatory” from *Amerasia Journal*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (2001).

**Diana Khoi Nguyen:** “The Exodus”, “A Woman May Not Be a Safe Place”, “Ghost Of” and “I Keep Getting Things Wrong” from *Ghost Of*, Omnidawn (2018).

**Vijay Seshadri:** “Three Persons” and “Bright Copper Kettles” from *Poetry* (December 2010); “Trailing Clouds of Glory” and “Three Urdu Poems” from *3 Sections: Poems*, Graywolf Press (2013).

**Cathy Song:** “Easter: Wahiawa, 1959” and “Spaces We Leave Empty” from *Picture Bride*, Yale University Press (1983); “The Grammar of Silk” from *School Figures*, University of Pittsburgh Press (1994); “The Pineapple Fields” from *The Land of Bliss*, University of Pittsburgh Press (2001); “Cloud Moving Hands” from *Cloud Moving Hands*, University of Pittsburgh Press (2007).

**Sokunthary Svay:** “Common Ground”, “Baptism”, “Mother Tongue” and “Don’t Let Your Heritage Be Past Tense” from *Apsara in New York*, Willow Books (2017).

**Arthur Sze:** “No. 4 from ‘Before Completion’”, “1 and 4 from ‘Oolong’” and “7 from ‘The Redshifting Web’”, from *The Redshifting Web: Poems 1970–1998* (Copper Canyon, 1998). Copyright 1998 by Arthur Sze. “Sight Lines” from *Sight Lines* (Copper Canyon, 2019). Copyright 2019 by Arthur Sze. Permission granted by author.

**Bryan Thao Worra:** “Departures” and “Preparations for Southeast Asia” from *Journal of Southeast Asian American Education and Advancement*, Vol. 2, Article 8 (2007). “Déjà Vu” from *Lao American Review* (September 2017); “Missoula, 1976” from *Little Laos on the Prairie* (June 2018).

**Pimone Triplett:** “Driving Eye”, “Snapshots with Wide Apertures Shown on the Road” and “On Pattern” from *Ruining the Picture*, Triquarterly (1998).

**Bunkong Tuon:** “Reciting Alphabets”, “Where Uncle Dreams” and “Living in the Hyphen” from *Gruel*, NYQ Books (2015); “Debt” from *The Margins* by the Transpacific Literary Project (November 2017).

**Mai Der Vang:** “Dear Soldier of the Secret War”, “Transmigration”, “Calling the Lost” and “Your Mountain Lies Down with You” from *AFTERLAND*, Graywolf Press (2018).

**Ocean Vuong:** “Immigrant Haibun”, “Always & Forever” and “Someday I’ll Love Ocean Vuong” from *Night Sky With Exit Wounds*, Copper Canyon Press (2016).

**Jenny Xie:** “Rootless”, “Naturalization”, “Chinatown Diptych”, “Exile” and “Long Nights” from *Eye Level*, Graywolf Press (2018).

**Wendy Xu:** “Phrasis” from *Poetry* (Dec 2014); “Inventory for Spring” from *Poetry* (February 2017); “Task Force” from *Phrasis*, Fence Books (2017); “Five Chinese Verses” from *Poetry* (January 2018).



**John Yau:** “Genghis Chan: Private Eye I” first published in *Radiant Silhouette: New and Selected Work, 1974-1988*, Black Sparrow Press, (1989) and reprinted in *Further Adventures in Monochrome*, Copper Canyon Press (2012); “Ing Grish” from *Ing Grish*, Saturnalia Books (2005), with drawings by Thomas Nozkowski; “First Language Lesson” from *Poetry* (July/August 2017); “Music from Childhood” from *Bijoux in the Dark*, Letter Machine Editions (2018).

**Timothy Yu:** “Chinese Silence 10”, “Chinese Silence 12”, “Chinese Silence 22”, “Chinese Silence 30” and “Chinese Silence 39” from *100 Chinese Silences*, Les Figues Press (2016).

**AUSTRALIA**

**Adam Aitken:** “Mandalay 1985” and “The Bad Women of Bangkok” from *In One House*, Angus & Robertson (1996); “Romeo and Juliet in Subtitles” from *Romeo and Juliet in Subtitles*, Brandl & Schlesinger (2000); “Lines from the Lover” from *Eighth Habitation*, Giramondo (2009).

**Ivy Alvarez:** “vena cava” and “breast” from *Mortal*, Red Morning Press (2006); “Nag-aagaw-dilim” and “Naging bato” from *World Literature Today* (November 2018).

**Eunice Andrada:** “(because I am a daughter) of diaspora”, “rearrangement”, “last meal before deportation” and “recognition” from *Flood Damages*, Giramondo (2018).

**Mona Zahra Attamimi:** “Betel Nut” from *Long Paddock by Southerly* (2011); “Drifter” and “Mangosteen” from *Mascara Literary Review*, Issue 11 (May 2012); “The Message” from *Cordite* (May 2017).

**Maryam Azam:** “A Brief Guide to Hijab Fashion”, “Places I’ve Prayed”, “Wearing a Burkini in Malaysia” and “That Hijabi from Strathfield Girls” from *The Hijab Files*, Giramondo (2018). “A Brief Guide to Hijab Fashion” also appeared in *The Big Black Thing: Chapter 1*, ed. Michael Mohammed Ahmad & Winnie Dunn, Sweatshop, 2017.

**Merlinda Bobis:** “word gifts for an australian critic”, “going ethnic” and “first night” from *Summer Was a Fast Train Without Terminals*, Spinifex Press (1998); “Double-Crossed” and “Grandmother and the Border” from *Accidents of Composition*, Spinifex Press (2017).

**Lachlan Brown:** “(grandmothercountry)”, “(life-hyphen)”, “(factual manufacturing)”, “(a capable range of answers)” and “Filling out a Form” from *Lunar Inheritance*, Giramondo (2017).

**Michelle Cahill:** “Childhood”, “(In)Visible”, “City of Another Home” and “Hanumān” from *Vishvarūpa*, 5 Islands Press (2011), republished UWA Publishing (2019).

**Eileen Chong:** “Chinese Singing” from *Peony*, Pitt Street Poetry (2014); “Café, Elizabeth Bay” and “Murrumbidgee” from *Painting Red Orchids*, Pitt Street Poetry (2016); “Country” from *Rainforest*, Pitt Street Poetry (2018).

**Ec Tiang Hong:** “Portuguese Hamlet, Malacca” and “Tranquerah, Malacca” from *Myths for a Wilderness*, Heinemann Educational Books (Asia) (1976); “The Burden” and “Bukit China” from *Nearing a Horizon*, UniPress (1994).

**Sunil Govinnage:** “To My Son Growing Up in Australia”, “My English Verses”, “Don’t Ask Me”, “I Don’t Write Poems in Sinhala Anymore” and “The Evening Before the Departure” from *White Mask: A Collection of New Australian Poetry*, iUniverse (2004).

**Louise Ho:** “Remembering 4th June, 1989”, “Migratory”, “Island” and “Found Items” from *Incense Tree: Collected Poems of Louise Ho*, Hong Kong University Press (2009).

**Bella Li:** “아|가|씨|” from *Argosy*, Vagabond Press (2017); “Just Then” from *Best Australian Poems 2012*, Black Inc. (2012); “Window” from *Otoliths*, Issue 21 (May 2011). “Just Then” and “Window” reprinted in *Maps, Cargo*, Vagabond Press (2013).

**Debbie Lim:** “Women in Classical Chinese Love Poems” from *Best Australian Poems 2013*, Black Inc. (2013); “The Egret”, “The Beautiful Woman with a Burnt Face” and “Blue” from *Beastly Eye*, Vagabond Press (2012).

**Miriam Wei Wei Lo:** “No Pretty Words”, “The War Comes Home”, “Margaret River” and “Fruit in Season” from *No Pretty Words*, Picaro Press (2010).

**Gita Mammen:** “Carry-on Baggage”, “Lost Mother Tongue”, “Lune Synod” and “Nebuchadnessar’s Lion” first published in this collection, courtesy of the author.

**Omar Musa:** “The Great Displaced” and “What Will Be Left of Us?” from *Parang*, Penguin Books Australia (2014); “Blood Poetry” and “Do you remember?” from States of Poetry ACT Series One (March 2016).

**Nguyễn Tiên Hoàng:** “Homecoming with”, “The Fifth Moon”, “Ring” and “Hàn River” from *Captive and Temporal*, Vagabond Press (2017).

**Ouyang Yu:** “Place names, a Tale of Chinese Invasion”, “The Kingsbury Tales: the mix”, “An Aboriginal Tale” and “Speaking English in Chinese” from *The Kingsbury Tales*, Brandl & Schlesinger (2008).

**Andy Quan:** “Inheritance” and “Generations” from *Slant*, Nightwood Editions (2001); “Bowling Pin Fire” and “Aftertaste” from *Bowling Pin Fire*, Signature Editions (2007).

**UK & EUROPE**

**Shanta Acharya:** “Return of the Exile” and “Going Home” from *Dreams that Spell the Light*, Arc Publications, (2009); “Loose Talk” from *Imagine: New and Selected Poems*, Harper Collins India (2017), first appeared in *Numbering our Days’ Illusions*, Rockingham Press (1985) in a different form; “Painter of Gods” from *Imagine: New and Selected Poems*, Harper Collins India (2017).

**Moniza Alvi:** “Presents from My Aunts in Pakistan” and “The Sari” from *Split World: Poems 1990-2005*, Bloodaxe Books (2008); “Hindi Urdu Bol Chaal” first published in *A Bowl of Warm Air*, Oxford University Press (1996), reprinted in *Split World: Poems 1990-2005*, Bloodaxe Books (2008); “Must We Go?” from *At the Time of Partition*, Bloodaxe Books (2013).

**Khairani Barokka:** “The Closing of the Bones”, “Epicdermis”, “The Writer in Exile at Teatime” and “October/April” from *Rope*, Nine Arches Press (2017). A version of “Epicdermis” was first published in *Media Diversified* (October 2015) and “The Closing of the Bones” was first published in *Wordgathering* (September 2015).

**Mary Jean Chan:** “Happiness” from *The Poetry Society* (2019); “Love for the Living” and “When I Say That My Mother Cooked” from *A Hurry of English*, ignitionpress, Oxford Brookes Poetry Centre (2018).

**Debjani Chatterjee:** “To the English Language” and “The Question” from *I Was That Woman*, Hippopotamus Press (1989); “Across the Black Waters” from *Albino Gecko*, University of Salzburg Press (1998); “Of Tongues and Amazons” from *Namaskar: New and Selected Poems*, Redbeck Press (2004).

**Maya Chowdhry:** “Brides of Dust” won the 1992 Cardiff International Poetry Competition and was first published in *The Redbeck Anthology of British South Asian Poetry*, Redbeck Press (2000); “City of Culture” is an extract from *Four Corners*, BBC Radio 4 (1997); “indian ocean” was first published in *Putting in the Pickle Where the Jam Should be*, Write Back (1989); “I Am My Home” was first published in *Fossil*, Peepal Tree Press (2016).

**Rishi Dastidar:** “From Stavanger”, “#MyEngland”, “Risk patterns” and “Diversity campaign” © Rishi Dastidar, from the collection *Ticker-tape* published by Nine Arches Press (2017) [www.ninearchespress.com](http://www.ninearchespress.com).

**Imtiaz Dharker:** “I need” and “Call” from *The Terrorist at my Table*, Bloodaxe Books (2006); “Bombil, Bumla, Bummalo”, “Passport photo” and “Medium” from *Over the Moon*, Bloodaxe Books (2014).

**Romesh Guneseckera:** “Circled by Circe” from *Poetry Durham* (Winter 1985); “Appetite” first published in *Ambit*, Issue 103 (1986), reprinted in *Wasafiri*, Vol 10, Issue 21 (1994-95); “The Big Wave” from *Moving Worlds: 10 Years Forward, A Celebration*, Vol 10 (2010); “If This Is a City” from *Moving Worlds: Postcolonial Cities: South Asia*, Vol 13, No. 2 (2013).

**Will Harris:** “Mother’s Country” from *The Rialto* 87 (2016); “Self-portrait in front of a small mirror” and “Identity” were published in *All this is implied* (HappenStance, 2017), as was “State-building” in a slightly different form under the title “Bee Glue”.

**Sarah Howe:** “Crossing from Guangdong”, “(b) Embalmed”, “(l) Others” and “Islands” from *Loop of Jade*, Chatto & Windus (2015).



**Shamshad Khan:** “Oppressed coverage (1991)” and “I’ve been waiting for funding so long” from *Megalomaniac*, Salt Publishing (2007); “Love – Over Eating and Over Hearing” from *Poetry International* (2006); “Manchester Snow (abridged)” originally appeared in ‘Region/ Writing/Home: Relocating Diasporic Writing in Britain’, *Moving Worlds: A Journal of Transcultural Writings* Vol 9.2 (2009), 41-46. <[www.movingworlds.net](http://www.movingworlds.net)>, also referred to in *Postcolonial Manchester: Diaspora space and the devolution of literary culture*, Manchester University Press (2013).

**Seni Seneviratne:** “Opus Tessellatum”, “My Father’s Half-Told Story” and “Cinnamon Roots” from *Wild Cinnamon and Winter Skin*, Peepal Tree Press (2007); “Operation Cast Lead” from *The Heart of It*, Peepal Tree Press (2012).

**Fiona Sze-Lorrain:** “Instructions: No Meeting No World” and “China” from *Water the Moon*, Marick Press (2009); “Not Thinking about the Past” and “Come Back” from *My Funeral Gondola*, El León Literary Arts (2013).

**Wong May:** “Kampong Bahru, 1975”, “On Leaving Berlin” and “1944-1976” from *Superstitions*, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich (1978); “I Dream of Saying Good-Bye to Mother” from *Picasso’s Tears*, Octopus Books (2014).

**Jane Yeh:** “Bad Quarto” and “Paris, 1899” from *Marabou*, Carcanet Press (2006); “A Short History of Migration” from *The New Republic*, (May 2015); “A Short History of Silence” from *Poetry* (December 2017).

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