



Blood Belies

ELLEN

CHANG-RICHARDSON

POEMS

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POEMS

Also by Ellen Chang-Richardson

concussion, baby

Assimilation Tactics

snap, pop, performance: a series of ekphrasis

Unlucky Fours

In collaboration with VII


body disorder of being

Towers



Blood Belies

ELLEN CHANG-RICHARDSON



A Buckrider Book



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For those of you who look like me, and for those
who live between.

We need audacity in order to rewrite the world.

Carrienne Leung, "Writing in a Dangerous Time"

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I. *Record*

white rooms

locked
to us young, stirs

imagined landscapes
of shifting stone.

white cubes
no fissures, sky-

scrapers
over pastures of
weeping
willow

slowly
seeps

like biases

ooze

these white names

in white porcelain

& white
frames

whitelists

& broken

wrists

in white

white

rooms.

urban facts 2.0

Paired issues forever haunt us:

- 2024: what will the future bring?
- 2023: a hundred-year legacy, widely discussed.
- 2021: a 47 percent increase of racism reported over previous year.
- 2020: a man stalks an Asian; screams, *don't give me your fucking disease*.
- 2011: a twenty-one-year-old called **chink**, called *dumpling princess*, called ...

2023, 2021, 2020.

2011,

1999, 1996.

1947,

1923,

1902.

1885,

1880.

1858

1788

- 1999: a nine-year-old ridiculed, *a smelly ass lunch* ...
- 1996: a six-year-old told *dream*, told *you can be anything*, told ...
- 1947: an exclusionary legislation repealed.
- 1923: an exclusionary legislation enacted.
- 1902: a Royal Commission declares us dangerous and unhealthy to the state.

- 1885: a labour complete, a transcontinental road.
- 1880: a labour, a dream, a transcontinental transit.
- 1858: a sifting, a prospecting, a promise of gold.
- 1788: a new life, a hope, a trade in sea otter pelts.

As they relay the decency, polite
hypocrisy

of Canada.





Ellen Chang-Richardson is of Taiwanese and Chinese Cambodian descent. Winner of the 2020 Power of the Poets Ekphrastic Poetry Contest and the 2019 *Vallum* Award for Poetry, Ellen's multi-genre writing has appeared in *Augur*, *Canbini*, *The Fiddlehead*, *Grain*, *Plenitude* and *Watch Your Head: Writers and Artists Respond to the Climate Crisis* (Coach House Books, 2020), among others. They are a member of *Room* magazine's editorial collective, *long con magazine*'s editorial board and the creative poetry collective VII. They co-founded Riverbed Reading Series and are represented by Tasneem Motala at the Rights Factory.

Ellen currently lives and works on the traditional unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinaabeg.

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Author photograph © Curtis Perry.

“I have never read a poetry collection that is grounded in landscape as distinctly as *Blood Belies*, Ellen Chang-Richardson’s incisive, frank and gorgeous book. These poems probe at all the landscapes that haunt us – the landscapes of emotion, of trauma, of spaces external and internal – and do so with a precise voice that is sometimes quiet and sometimes roaring to be heard. I am in awe of Ellen’s talent and the small, poetic droplets of truth that have coalesced into this revelation of a book.”

- **Jen Sookfong Lee**, author of *Superfan* and *The Shadow List*

“*Blood Belies* is a remarkable collection that explores proximity and the inevitable spaces found within and between histories, lands, truth and ourselves. Thrilling in its fragmentary style, *Blood Belies* grapples with race, identity and family as the poet seeks out a new lexicon amidst the Canadian snowdrifts and archives. With every ‘like;’ ‘like;’ ‘like;’ Ellen Chang-Richardson folds the reader closer and closer into a world where ‘memory, / has a way / of skewing,’ where stories are told, untold, retold; where poetry is a language for survival. Chang-Richardson’s voice is at once intimate, perceptive and unforgettable.”

- **Gillian Sze**, author of *Quiet Night Think*

“*Blood Belies* explores fraught counterpoints between surface and depth, exposing enduring histories of racism and environmental neglect. In a fluid carousel of text, disruption, white space, image and narrative, Chang-Richardson’s urgent, inventive structures react to and subvert received hypocrisy, where each fugitive subtext weaves fracture into art.”

- **David O’Meara**, author of *Masses on Radar*

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