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Concert
of
Voices

SECOND
EDITION

edited by
Victor J. Ramraj

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Concert of Voices

Second Edition

"To redeem the word from the superstition of the word
is to humanize it, to make it participate once more in a
living concert of voices ..."

—Geoffrey Hartman, *Beyond Formalism*

Concert of Voices

An Anthology of
World Writing
in English

**SECOND
EDITION**

Edited by
Victor J. Ramraj



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Fred Wah

Fred Wah (b. 1939) was born in Saskatchewan, Canada. He has written several collections of poetry, including *Selected Poems* (1980), *Breathin' My Name with a Sigh* (1981), *Waiting for Saskatchewan* (1986), which won the Governor General's Award for Poetry, *Rooftops* (1988), and *Sentenced to Light* (2008). He has taught at the University of Calgary.

Fred Wah's poem "Breathin' My Name with a Sigh" is a short poem that raises the issues of hybridity and liminality inherent in postcolonial writers. It is a moving account of a father's sadness when his cultures and mores (even types of food) disappear from the consciousness and the daily lives of his children, who struggle with dual ethnicities. Compare this poem with Fiona Tinwei Lam's "The Hyphenated" and Leslie Marmon Silko's "Yellow Woman."

Breathin' My Name with a Sigh

my father hurt-
ing at the table
sitting hurting
at suppertime
deep inside very
far down inside
because I can't stand the ginger
in the beef and greens
he cooked for us tonight
and years later tonight
that look on his face
appears now on mine
my children
my food
their food
my father
their father
me mine
the father
very far
very very far
inside

1981

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