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# QUIET FIRE



A HISTORICAL  
ANTHOLOGY OF  
ASIAN AMERICAN  
POETRY

1892-1970

EDITED BY  
JULIANA CHANG

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# Quiet Fire

A Historical  
Anthology of  
Asian American  
Poetry  
1892-1970

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QUIET FIRE:  
A HISTORICAL ANTHOLOGY OF  
ASIAN AMERICAN POETRY 1892-1970

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FOR MY PARENTS,

Victor Fong-Shou Chang &

Mary Mei-Lee Chu Chang

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FRED WAH

## They are Burning

Pitch black up the valley  
in front of us twenty miles  
they are burning the mountains down  
the sky is that kind of orange  
the hillsides are outlined to us  
in just that orange horizon  
which will be gone with daybreak  
when the smoke of their burning  
hangs over the valleys rivers and trees  
drifts slowly on the contours of the land  
and the deadness where no birds fly.

Yes they are burning  
for it is July  
and August and the nights  
with no wind the darkness is cool.

What I thought would be there is not  
I'm sorry to say. What I had expected  
was to sleep for the ride with eyes closed  
not drive into a burning mountainside.

1965

# Mountain

Mountain come over me in my youth  
    green grey orange of colored dreams  
darkest hours of no distance  
    Mountain full of creeks ravines of rock  
and pasture meadow snow white ridges humps of granite  
    ice springs trails twigs stumps sticks leaves moss  
    shit of bear deer balls rabbit shit  
    shifts and cracks of glaciation mineral  
O Mountain hung over me in these years of fiery desire  
    burns on your sides your many crotches rocked  
    and treed in silence from the winds  
Mountain many voices nameless curves and pocked in shadows  
    not wild but smooth  
your instant flats flat walls of rock  
    your troughs of shale and bits  
soft summer glacier snow  
    the melting edge of rounded stone  
and cutting of your height the clouds  
    a jagged blue  
    your nights your nights alone  
your winds your winds your grass  
    your lying slopes your holes your traps  
    quick blurs of all my dreams  
Mountain poem of life  
    true and real  
    reeling Mountain burning mind  
stand word stand letter  
    voice in whisper secret repeating cries  
stand in rock stretch out  
    in all ways to the timber line  
spread over all valleys run cool the waters down  
    from luminous white snows  
    your cracks

O creek song flow always an utter pure of coolness  
spring from the rocks  
sing in the hot thirsty my sticky tongue  
my jaw catch below the bridge  
Yes my jaw for your waters hangs  
catch of water soothe the sweat  
sweet cold on teeth in flow and eddy  
in swirl my gut it fills and bloats with fluid mountain

1967

# QUIET FIRE

A Historical Anthology of  
Asian American Poetry 1892-1970  
Juliana Chang, Editor

**T**his landmark anthology provides the first historical survey of Asian American poetry. The poems were selected to reflect both the high quality and wide range of Asian American poetic discourse. The anthology begins with writings from the 1890's by Sadakichi Hartmann and Yone Noguchi, and includes poems by Jun Fujita (1923), Bunishi Kagawa (1930), Hisaye Yamamoto (1940), Diana Chang (1946), and others. Early work by well-known writers Joy Kogawa, Jessica Hagedorn, and Lawson Inada are also represented. Essays by Fay Chiang, Eric Chock, Alan Chong Lau, Kimiko Hahn, and Gerry Shikatani give an overview of regional Asian American poetry scenes from the 1970's through the 1990's and the editor provides a complete bibliography of published volumes of Asian American poetry. An important source-book, *Quiet Fire* makes a significant contribution to the remapping of American poetry and Asian American literature.

**Juliana Chang** is Assistant Professor of English at Boston College and is currently working on a book-length study of Asian American poetry.

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