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Program teaches youth about Seattle's Duwamish River and its toxic seafood

By Elizabeth Mai
IE Contributor

Salmon is the only safe seafood to eat from the Duwamish River. This was the message echoed on July 29, 2023 during a presentation by eight local high school students from the Agents of Change: Youth for Healthy Seafood cohort, a youth program organized out of a partnership between Public Health — Seattle & King County and South Seattle-based environmental organization ECOSS.

On a sunny Saturday morning, the group celebrated the end of their 12-week summer program with community leaders who had supported them from the beginning. The youth program was originally designed to equip the region's youth with environmental stewardship skills and experiences, all while educating Seattle and South King County's growing immigrant and refugee communities who may live near or fish from Duwamish River, a designated superfund site.

"Nature and outdoors, historically, has been inaccessible to people of color, to immigrants," said Cindy Nguyen, a program manager at ECOSS. "It's important that we create opportunities for them to engage with the water and go fishing, to help them feel like they have a place and a deeper connection to the land."

A child of immigrants, Nguyen reflected on why it's essential to make environmental education more accessible to communities that are excluded from the white-dominant, outdoor narrative, yet are frequently most impacted by environmental toxicity and pollution. To her, the program is about local youth reclaiming their equal right to enjoy nature's mental and physical benefits while proudly expressing their cultural identities, no matter where they live or descend from.

In May 2023, Nguyen's team — three multilingual community engagement specialists who work with culturally diverse communities on environmentally sustainable solutions — piloted Agents of Change: Youth for Healthy Seafood, connecting eight high school students from refugee and immigrant backgrounds to hands-on experiences pertaining to the Duwamish River ecosystem.



Youth gather at the Duwamish River Community Hub for a session led by Cindy Nguyen • Courtesy of ECOSS

They learned about and interacted with local residents who had been historically impacted by the river, all while developing their community outreach skills and earning a stipend.

"I see it as a project-based learning style," said Nguyen on the development of the program's curriculum. "By the end, [youth] are creating [an outreach poster] and then going to present it to the entire [Community Health Advocates], Public Health, ECOSS community. What information do they have to learn to get there? What kind of skills do they have to practice to get there?"

Immigrant and refugee cultural fishing practices

This is not ECOSS' first Duwamish River project. From 2014 to 2016, the organization collected data to support the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Public Health — Seattle & King County in identifying alternative cleanup efforts for the toxic chemical-filled river, which was polluted from upstream industrial activity, putting both human health and the environment at risk.

"ECOSS was hired on to go out to the docks and assess the demographic diversity of fishers who fish along the [Duwamish River], but also to see if people know that the only fish that's safe to eat is salmon," said Nguyen.

The study revealed that the predominant ethnic and/or language groups that fished from the river were Vietnamese, Latino, Khmer, and Lao, which led to the formation of Public Health's four Community Health Advocates (CHA) teams in 2015 to 2017, and 2021.

These advocates were experienced multilingual fishers working in close liaison with the department and their respective communities, educating these groups on the health risks of eating seafood other than salmon from the Duwamish River.

"Fishing is a very strong part of the cultural identity of these groups," said Khanh Ho, educator consultant at Public Health — Seattle & King County. "[CHA] shared so many stories about fishing: how it's been a generational practice, how it makes them feel connected to their home countries, and just how they used to fish back home."

She explained that many immigrants and refugees who settled in the Duwamish Valley find comfort in Seattle's only river, which represents the lower 12 miles of Washington's Green River. Though there's a familiarity of home when fishing for seafood like rockfish, flounder, perch, and crab to feed their families traditional cultural dishes, the seafood these communities gravitated toward were often highly contaminated for human consumption, and they didn't know it.

In order to decrease this risk, Public Health — Seattle & King County, in collaboration with the EPA, established the Fun to Catch, Toxic to Eat program in 2018. This program, led by Ho, consists of a community steering committee whose members include the four CHA teams. They developed outreach strategies to inform fishers, caregivers who cook family meals, community and faith-based organizations, and youth about the Duwamish seafood advisory.

The Agents of Change: Youth for Healthy Seafood program, implemented by ECOSS, is the final strategy that the community steering committee hopes will increase awareness on this health issue, specifically identifying youth outreach and environmental education as a priority.

"[We] felt like youth voices had a lot of impact," Ho explained. "Youth have the ability and the potential to educate each other, generations before them, and generations after them — within their families and within their community."

Environmental justice is for everyone

Throughout the 12-week program, youth attended learning sessions led by the ECOSS team at the Duwamish River Community Hub and participated in CHA-led field trips to various locations around the Duwamish River area.

One field trip the youth highlighted as memorable is the fishing trip organized by the Lao CHA team. "[CHA] provided fishing gear and supplies and had experienced fishers, like elders, who are kind of mentoring each of the youth at the site and just teaching them how to use the pole," said Nguyen. The lesson was declared a success after one student caught a fish.

During this same trip, members of the cohort had the opportunity to have fun in nature while observing the Department of Health's seafood advisory signs which are placed around fishing sites along the river. Despite the bold red, yellow, and green signage, CHA knows that it might not be

DUWAMISH RIVER: Continued on page 19. . .



Established in 1974, the *International Examiner* is the only non-profit pan-Asian, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander American media organization in the country. Named after the International District in Seattle, the "IE" strives to create awareness within and for our ANHPIA communities.

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Former CID garden coordinator Sharon Hart passes away at 75

By Ron Chew
IE Contributor

Sharon Hart, coordinator of the Danny Woo International District Community Garden in the early 1980s, succumbed to uterine cancer last month at her home in Palouse, Washington at the age of 75.

Hart had worked closely with Bob Santos — then-director of InterIm CDA, the nonprofit which manages the 1.5-acre hillside garden — to shape the early vision of the space as a vital active greenspace for elderly Chinatown International District (CID) residents to grow their own vegetables and other produce.

“She is the reason the garden is as large as it is today,” said Sue Taoka, Hart’s close friend who worked alongside her as an organizer. “Sharon and Bob decided the garden needed to be expanded to accommodate the growing number of garden requests. Bob did the political work and Sharon did the execution, finding rail ties to hold up the hill and getting university students on work study and other volunteers to carry ties, move gravel, and shovel horse manure.”

Taoka continued: “Sharon never let language be a barrier. I would find her in the garden talking with one of the Chinese gardeners with hand signals and mime. They would be having a grand old time and I was clueless. The gardeners loved her be-

cause she was always there for them, even when she was telling them that night soil was a no-no!”

Hart was born in Crosby, North Dakota, on a family farm which was homesteaded in 1910. After her father died, Sharon and her mother moved to Rapid City, South Dakota, where she met her first husband, Ron Hart. He was studying anthropology at Michigan State University when Sharon became pregnant with their daughter Jemila. His field work took the family to North Yemen, where Sharon taught biology and math. Hart toured the country with her daughter, becoming one of the first women licensed to drive a motorcycle.

After Ron was diagnosed with cancer, the family moved back to Seattle in 1979 to be close to his parents. He passed away in 1980. In 2000, she met her second husband Dave Tharp in Pullman. The two married in 2002.

In a statement dictated to Jemila and Dave just before her death, Hart recalled that following her first husband’s death, she was “very, very fortunate” to find the “best job” as garden coordinator in the CID.

“I met Bob Santos, the best boss that I ever had in my life,” she said. “I will always cherish the lifelong friends that I met in the CID as part of that garden project. We had so much fun and it has meant so much to have known them.”



Sharon Hart, pictured in the center, works with several volunteers to move a railroad tie into place at Danny Woo International District Community Garden • Courtesy of InterIm CDA

Taoka added that Hart lived a vibrant and active life.

“After her diagnosis, [Hart] continued to live her life on her terms. She did yoga every morning,” she said.

“She tended her expansive garden. She and Dave camped out at the Blues Festival.

She ran — not walked — the Bloomsday race in Spokane. She floated the St. Joe River in Idaho, and she gave herself a great 75th birthday party in the Palouse City Park and danced the entire time. She did all this with a wonderful attitude of peace and love. I only hope I have a fraction of her equanimity when my time comes.” ■

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IE ELECTION

The International Examiner interviews Seattle City Council District 2 candidates Tammy Morales and Tanya Woo on CID key issues ahead of election

International Examiner: What is your takeaway from the results of the primary election in August, for your campaign?

Tammy Morales: Well, we were very pleased with the results. I know that District 2 is one of the more progressive parts of the city, and I think it means that people are interested in having a representative who is looking for real solutions to the challenges that we have in the city.

Tanya Woo: Yes, I'm excited and humbled and honored at the results. And excited to be able to campaign for three more months. I think our message has resonated with many community members. And I'm looking forward to knocking on doors and asking people what their thoughts are, regarding all the issues that we're seeing around District 2.

IE: If you are (re-)elected, what do you see as the top issues that need addressing for the Chinatown International District (CID) heading into 2024?

TM: Well, you know, there are lots of issues that the city as a whole is dealing with, and many of them affect the CID more acutely. So there are issues around land use and affordability for sure, we know that. The median income in the CID is, I think, is something like \$20,000 to \$22,000 dollars. So there are some real issues that we need to make sure we're addressing, so families can stay.

Housing affordability is definitely one of them, supporting our small businesses so that they don't get pushed out either, I think is really an important part of why we are going to be looking at making permanent the commercial rent control that we had put in place during the pandemic. That's a really important piece so that our local businesses are able to stay in the city.

And then we know that just in terms of the way that city operates, language access is a huge issue. This is a long standing issue. So you know, one of the things that we did, my office worked with the Department of Neighborhoods to put together a resource guide, for example, because we know that there are folks who don't know who to call if they if they don't want to call the police. If they witnessed somebody who's having a crisis on the street, folks weren't sure who to call.

We worked with the Department of Neighborhoods to create a resource guide of service providers in the neighborhood, and translated that into six or seven different Asian languages. That's something that all of our City departments should be doing, making sure that any public facing information they have is easily accessible in different languages. So I'm actually working with the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs to create a language access policy for the City, we have something as an executive order, but we're really working to figure out how we support our City departments in increasing that kind of access.



Councilmember Tammy Morales • Courtesy



Tanya Woo • Courtesy

TW: I guess the top three for me really tie in with my three priorities. Public safety is the one I hear most about in the CID and that covers a whole host of things in the community. It means seniors having being able to walk around safely and be able to sit the park in the evening hours, it means that businesses don't have to worry about broken windows, they don't have to worry about graffiti, and are able to hire good workers who are not fearful to come into work, and not be worried about their safety when they're traveling to and from their homes.

It also means having a safe place and programs for our youth to go to. Summit Sierra High School is up the street and there's been a lot of concerns with 12th and Jackson. How do we make sure that our young people are safe and feel safe, so they can learn? And also for our unhoused residents, that they don't have to worry about their own personal safety as well. That's what we're seeing on 12th and Jackson with the fentanyl overdoses, that there's outreach and engagement out there trying to get people to accept treatments and to accept housing, as well as if there is an overdose, that there are people nearby with Narcan who can help resuscitate people. How do we change the narrative and change that environment on 12th and Jackson, 12th and King, 12th and Weller?

It's also bleeding into our parks. Another added public safety issue was, for people visiting the district people who were there to attend the Mariners games, people who are there to attend a festival or fair to visit out restaurants or visit our shops or museum, how to increase that foot traffic and get away from the narrative that CID is not safe. That that will involve a lot of work to undo four years of perception. We're all trying to rebuild after the pandemic and I think it involves doing added outreach and engagement to our non English-speaking refugee, immigrant communities. That's one of the top issues.

Second issue, I think, is housing. We're in

a historic district, and many of the buildings that are in this district are not up to code — they're not up to fire code, they're not up to earthquake code. How do we work together with the City, with the residents, to have access to capital to be able to make those upgrades to these buildings without adding costs and burden to our Family Associations who own these buildings, and to provide affordable housing, such as workforce housing or senior housing? So, in a way, able to keep our community ownership of these buildings and not having to sell to international corporations who don't know our community, but how can we preserve our history and our legacies, and be able to modify our buildings to live for another 100 years? This is a major issue. And for the area that's not in the historic district, how are we able to offer housing so that people who work in the city can live in the city, and seniors can age in place?

Another priority of mine is homelessness. That kind of ties in with public safety and housing. How can we help our unhoused neighbors come in? I think that's building trust because the best way to build trust is through relationships. And then with relationships of trust, we can easily deescalate if there's ever an issue. I've found that, you know, going out on 12th and Jackson, and building that trust, having people know you and know that you're safe, helps further the conversation into people asking for help, if they have medical issues or they want to go into treatment, or if there any other situations, is really important. I think transportation is a huge, huge issue as well, as you see play out with ST3 [Sound Transit 3].

IE: Throughout your civic work in the CID, is there a particular lesson that you've learned or anecdote that you could share that challenged you, or taught you something new about the neighborhood?

TM: That's a great question. You know, I think what is challenging about this work in general, given the many ethnic groups,

community groups that we have in the city, you know, I have the most diverse district in Seattle. And within any given community, it is easy to assume that everybody in the community believes the same way, has the same priorities and preferences, and that's just not true. It wasn't that I learned that in the CID, but I saw a few different examples of that really clearly in the last couple of years.

Whether it was the [Sound] Transit station or the response to the SoDo shelter expansion, folks don't always agree. It is important to engage, no matter what side folks are on and then it's my job as a council member to to move forward with what I think is best for the community itself and for the city. And that's not always the popular thing. But you know, we really have to be thinking about how, in the case of the CID, how to make sure that we aren't contributing to displacement, we aren't contributing to inequity, moving forward as a city with policies and solutions that can really address the history and the legacy of zoning and redlining.

So that's one thing. And then I think the other thing is really, for example, in the case of the the transit station, working with our partners at Sound Transit, at the county, to identify specific mitigation measures that they will commit to, because the community has been asking all along, you know, what will Sound Transit commit to, regardless of which option is chosen? That's something that we'll be working on and making sure that they deliver specific community benefits to the neighborhood as early as possible.

TW: The pandemic was a huge game changer for everybody. It accelerated a lot of the issues that we were seeing. The community experienced a lot of anti-Asian hate and pandemic racism, and that really accelerated a lot of mistrust, as well with city government, county, as well as federal. The community really, really had to work hard. Everything was closed down. Many of our mom and pop small businesses had their windows broken, had graffiti, had looting. A lot of our small businesses and families who lived in the city did not understand the larger issue of what was happening in the city in terms of, you know, equity and social justice movements, and were really confused.

There was a lot of education that went both ways in terms of how community deals with the larger city, and how a community can come together to help itself. In a way there were a lot of great initiatives, great organizations that came together. What really struck me was the amount of care and the outpouring of outreach support that came into the community amongst each other, and from outside the community. It really touched me. When we started the CID Community Watch at the early stages of the pandemic, people turned out from all over

DISTRICT 2: Continued on page 11. . .

On the Fence Line: A handwritten message from solitary confinement

By Felix Sitthivong
IE Contributor

I know at some point of our lives we've all felt overwhelmed. In those moments, it's tempting to feel disconnected from community and those who love us most, to feel immobilized by fear, shame, guilt, and regret. In those moments, we love harder. We have to.

As I write this, it's currently my second week in solitary confinement. It's a place I've been before. A prison within a prison — a rite of passage in my younger days.

The prison alleging some trumped up infractions to further disrupt the advocacy work of the Asian and Pacific Islander Cultural Awareness Group (APICAG), retaliating against me for knowing exactly who I am as a person? That's the short story, and no one in solitary confinement wants to hear long stories.

While I can't go into details about my specific situation, I want community to know that our sun continues to rise. And my spirit remains intact. They're watching. They're always watching.

I was recently blessed to get a visit from my wife. Cuffed behind my back and attached to a leash, I was escorted by two guards to a small holding tank with glass in between us. Thankfully they brought me first and uncuffed me before she had to witness her husband being dragged around like a rabid dog.

Finally, she appears — the sight of her worth every moment with "Officer Leash."

We both grasp at the phones we have to speak into to communicate. Her voice is a much needed break from the constant yelling and sounds of people kicking their doors day and night.

Although our visit was only two short hours, her strength and determination reminded me that I wasn't alone. I was so happy to see her that I even thanked the Officer afterwards for what? I don't know.

For what? I don't know.

Back in my cell, the loneliness returns. The flickering overhead light, which stays on 24-hours-a-day, reminds me that I haven't had a good night of sleep in over a week. My stomach growls to ensure I don't forget how hungry I am. I'm still irritated at the guard who trashed the peanut butter and jelly sandwich meant to get me through the night.

Solitary confinement is just that — sitting in a cell with nothing. Locked down twenty three hours a day, sometimes twenty four. One hour of recreation and access to a phone five times a week. Three 10-minute showers in those same seven days.

No. Solitary is not meant for people. I wouldn't wish this on anybody. Not even those who placed me here.

I think of my friend Thea, who awhile back tragically ended his own life at this

Page 2

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Solitary confinement is just that - sitting in a cell with nothing. Locked down 23 hours a day - sometimes 24 hours. 1 hour of recreation and phone 5 times a week. 3 10-minute showers in those same seven days.

No solitary is not meant for people. I wouldn't wish this on anybody. Not even those who placed me here.

I think of my friend Thea who a while back tragically ended his own life at this same facility while placed in solitary after a tuberculosis diagnosis.

Page 2

same facility while placed in solitary after a tuberculosis diagnosis. The pain and despair he must've felt after months of isolation. My heart breaks.

I think of all the victims of the Department of Corrections as they've continued to abuse solitary confinement and the Administration Segregation process to target people and isolate them into submission — those sitting in these same solitary cells throughout the state for weeks, months, and years at a time.

How do they always get away with this?

I know I'm blessed to still get visits. And I will always be grateful for those advocating for me. I also will never take for granted that there are still people at the other end of my phone calls. But as community and those who love me and advocate for me, please also advocate for those who've been here... long forgotten. Those who don't get visits. Those with nobody at all. Those who've persevered alone for so long that they should be allowed to rest.

Though my fate is uncertain, my love for my community is not. By the time y'all read this, my world may have shifted ten-fold. But do not forget ALL of us trapped in the DOC's system of abuse, or else they've already won.

Though my stomach is empty, my heart is full.

I close my eyes and find peace in knowing my brothers Billy, Time, Phon, Cisco, Jarrod, AZ, Jojo, and the whole cultural collective have my back. That Oloth, Brandon, and Andy are holding it down. That ACRS won't let me be forgotten. That Disability Rights Washington will maintain a watchful eye. That KO and Tabs will remind my wife to rest. All y'all keep me going.

This is far from the end. Our love is resistance.

Until next time, keep dreaming.

— Felix

In light of recent repression we are calling on electeds to support our loved ones facing increasing repression at Stafford Creek Corrections Center. Please read the

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demands below and from your position as elected contact these DOC and Washington State administrators:

Jason Bennett, SCCC Superintendent, jmbennett@doc1.wa.gov

Cheryl Strange, Secretary of the Department of Corrections, cheryl.strange@doc1.wa.gov

Sean Murphy, Deputy Secretary, sean.murphy@doc1.wa.gov

Dontae Payne, Governor's Office, dontae.payne@gov.wa.gov

Additionally we ask your office to observe live infraction hearings of targeted APICAG members to ensure they are given fair hearings.

COMMUNITY DEMANDS:

We demand an end to the racist targeting of APICAG members.

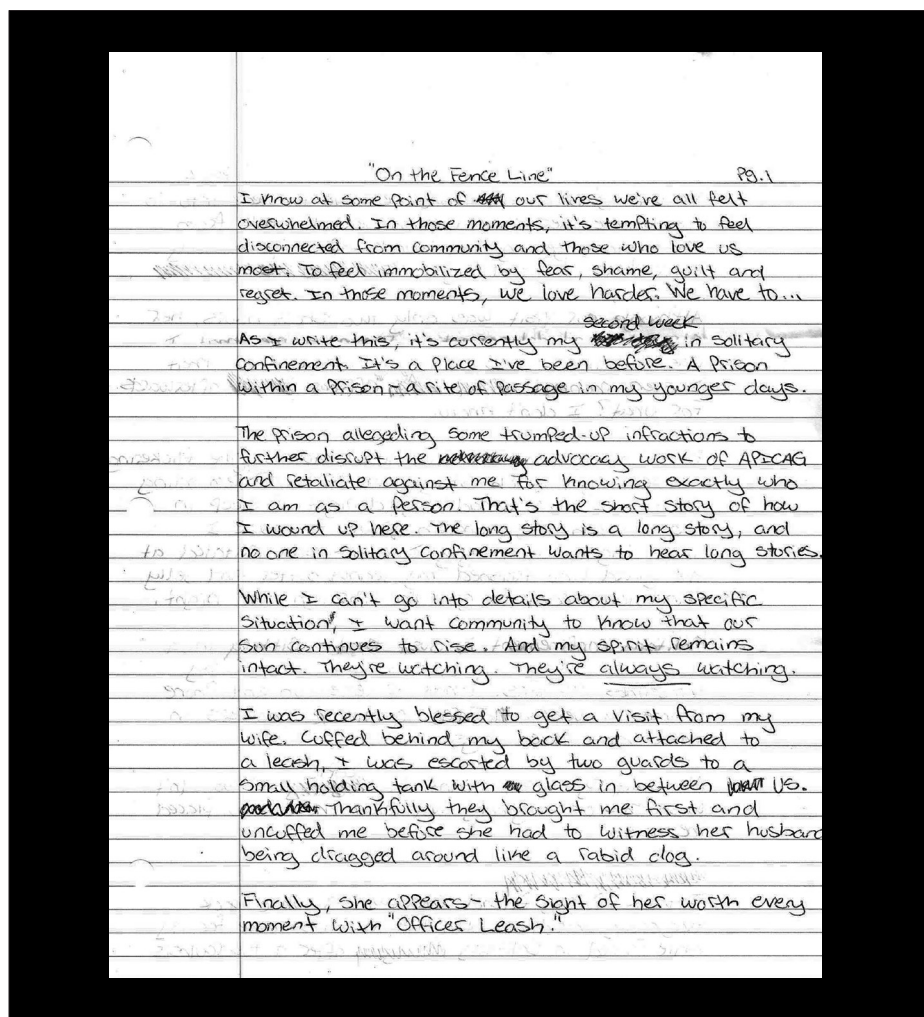
We demand targeted members be returned to their units to program without harassment or further retaliation by staff.

We demand Karin Arnold be held accountable for her discriminatory actions, as she has a pattern of abusing her power.

We demand APICAG be allowed to continue their essential community work building up community members, providing culturally competent healing spaces, connecting members to resources for their release and generally supporting the growth and development of our incarcerated loved ones.

We demand fair process and hearings for targeted members.

Felix Sitthivong is a journalist, organizer, member of Empowerment Avenue, and advisor for the Asian Pacific Islander Cultural Awareness Group (APICAG). Through APICAG, Sitthivong has organized immigration, social justice and youth outreach forums and has designed Asian American studies courses, an intersectional feminism 101 class and an anti-domestic violence program. You can reach him with questions for "On the Fence Line" via Securus (WA #354579) or write to him at Felix Sitthivong #354579, WCC, PO Box 900, Shelton, WA 98584. ■



Page 1 of columnist Felix Sitthivong's handwritten edition of 'On the Fence Line,' which he wrote from a solitary confinement cell after being retaliated against for his cultural organizing work.

IE NEWS

Ongoing effort to commemorate the anti-Chinese riot of 1886 at Seattle Waterfront

By Chetanya Robinson
IE Managing Editor

On February 7, 1886, white mobs invaded Seattle's first Chinatown (now Pioneer Square), to forcibly expel Chinese residents from the city. Under the pretext that the Chinese residents were violating Seattle's cubic-air ordinance regulating crowdedness of living spaces, the mob forced some 350 Chinese residents onto wagons toward the Seattle waterfront, where they demanded the Chinese board a steamer for San Francisco.

The 1886 riot was fueled by anti-Chinese racism, which had been intensifying since Chinese settlers first arrived in the western U.S. The Chinese settlers in Seattle worked to lay down the railroad, dig in coal mines, and in the salmon canneries. The riots followed an economic recession in the 1880s, which made jobs scarce, and the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, which banned Chinese immigration altogether.

Seattle's riot was the latest in a wave of anti-Chinese violence that erupted across the American West. On Sept. 2, 1885, a mob murdered 28 Chinese miners in Rock Springs, Wyoming Territory, an incident that alarmed local Chinese in Seattle. Five days later, three Chinese hops pickers were killed by a mob in what's now Issaquah, and four days later, Chinese mine workers were attacked and expelled from the Newcastle area. In November that year, a violent mob in Tacoma carried out a scheme to expel almost all of Tacoma's Chinese community, killing some and burning Tacoma's Chinatown to the ground.

"The early Chinese immigrants were seen as intellectually inferior, cruel, heathens, deceitful, and despotic," according to Doug Chin, historian and author of *Seattle's International District: The Making of a Pan-Asian American Community*. "Moreover, they were also seen as unfair labor competition and 'tools of the Capitalists.' The ultimate goal of the anti-Chinese movement was to get rid of the Chinese from America."

Washington's Territorial Governor called a state of insurrection and declared martial law in response to the riot. Before the riot, Seattle's Chinese population was around 600. Afterward, few remained until a second wave of immigration.

For much of Seattle's history, this ugly incident was almost ignored by textbooks and the media, according to Chin. "I went to school here in the 1950s, they had nothing," he said. "For the longest time, there was no mention in the history books."

No plaque or work of public art commemorates the riot at the Seattle Waterfront, where it happened — but this could change.

The current Waterfront redevelopment did not fund a dedicated installation commemorating the riot. According to a spokesperson for the City's Waterfront Program in an email, the program "has provided staff time and technical support of the subject art project at our cost, however it does not grant funds for privately-initiated projects. We don't anticipate this changing in the future."



Navy Landing (foot of Washington Street, Seattle, later known as Public Boat Landing, Washington Street Public Boat Landing Facility, etc.), 1920 • Courtesy of the Seattle Municipal Archives

The Waterfront redevelopment will include "a series of interpretive panels that will describe the natural and cultural histories of this place," according to the Waterfront Seattle Program spokesperson. "The interpretive signage is generally focused around themes, and we weave the stories of different groups of people, including Asian immigrants, into panels about immigration and exclusion, labor and business."

Instead, a private committee called the Chinese American Legacy Artwork Project Governing Committee (CALAP) has been

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raising money to fabricate and install a commemorative public installation for the riot at Alaskan Way South and South Washington.

The idea of a commemorative installation came to Chin and civic activist Bettie Luke (sister of the late Wing Luke) when the city announced its re-development plan for the Waterfront.

Luke had organized rallies commemorating the 1886 anti-Chinese riot, including one on its 125th anniversary in 2011. At that event, marchers walked from the waterfront to the Chinatown International District — a

defiant reversal of the route the Chinese residents were forced to take out of Seattle.

"[Bettie Luke] raised the question, why do we need to do this all the time?" Chin said. "What can we do to make the public know about this without having a damn rally every few years? So my idea was to just have a memorial, a permanent, substantial memorial so people will know about it."

Other cities have made efforts to acknowledge their histories of violent anti-Chinese racism: Tacoma created Chinese Reconciliation Park, and a memorial exists for a massacre of Chinese immigrants near the Snake River in Oregon and in other cities.

Luke and Chin attended planning sessions held by the Waterfront Project suggesting that a memorial be installed in the redeveloped waterfront. Eventually, the Waterfront Project agreed to reserve a space along the new Alaskan Way, Chin said. However, it would be up to advocates to fund and install the memorial. "They gave us a place to put a monument, but they weren't going to pay for it," Chin said.

Artist Stewart Wong was selected by the CALAP committee to design the commemorative installation. Wong's other public works include *Our Heritage*, *Our Journey*, *Our Dreams*, installed inside the Wing Luke Museum. In collaboration with artist Cheryl Leo-Gwin, he also designed *View from Gold Mountain*, a piece located at the Second Judicial District Court Bernalillo County, Albuquerque, which commemorates the 1882 landmark *Yee Shun* case, a victory in the fight against racism gaining the right for Chinese in America to testify in a court of law.

Wong's richly symbolic design will feature a narrative plaque and a 10-foot tall X sign (representing the division between the Chinese and the mob and the word "expulsion"). It will feature six-foot figures representing the mob and the Chinese workers standing on opposing sides, and scales of justice tilted toward the mob side, "expressing the inequity of the time," Wong said. More details of the design plans can be found on Wong's website: <https://bit.ly/45VuY1A>.

Wong wanted to design a piece of public art that commemorated "history that's been kind of erased, or not even included in the textbook," he said — history that younger generations may not be aware of. Born and raised in Honolulu, Wong said he never learned about the history of Chinese expulsion in the American West until he came to Seattle for college.

Wong hopes the installation will be a destination for school field trips, and form part of a walking tour of CID history. "I want this to bring awareness, to inform people so that history doesn't repeat itself," he said. "And the best way to do that is to educate people and to cultivate understanding, understanding and appreciation for diversity and appreciation for our struggles."

"And to remind people that bullying is not acceptable," he added. "Because this is really what it boils down to — bullying, right? Power, who's in charge... Setting restrictions and laws that exclude a particular group of people is a type of bullying."

Wong's concept has been approved by the CALAP committee, but the committee must raise more funds before it can be fabricated.

The fundraising goal stands at \$500,000 and is in its early stages, according to Cassie Chinn, a member of the committee. Chin resigned from the CALAP committee, disagreeing with the higher budget and skeptical the committee could raise it from private donations. Nonetheless, Chin hopes the committee can secure enough private or public funds to install the piece.

The project went over budget, Wong said, because of materials costs. "I suggested to them that we have this cast in bronze to really express the legacy and the importance of the events," he said. "And also the fact that we want this to last for many decades."

For Chin, it's imperative that the history of Asian Americans, who now make up a significant portion of Seattle's population, is represented at the Seattle Waterfront. "It's important for all people of color to have knowledge of their own experience in Washington state," Chin said, "because they all played a role in the development of this state. When they do that, you get a sense of belonging. I belong here, man, because my people helped build this state. But man, if you leave it out — that's being marginalized."

Those interested in donating to fund-raise for the installation can do so online at <https://bit.ly/3sLJfQk>, or donations can be made through the Wing Luke Museum. For online donations, visit www.wingluke.org and click on "Make a Donation." In the comment box for your donation, add "For the Chinese American Legacy Artwork Project." To make a gift by phone, call the Wing Luke Museum at 206.623.5124. If you'd prefer to mail in your gift, please send it to: Wing Luke Museum, PO Box 3025, Seattle, WA 98114. Be sure to indicate that your donation is "For the Chinese American Legacy Artwork Project." ■

NEWS BRIEF: Mayor Harrell urges patience in addressing crime on 12th and Jackson in Little Saigon

By Chetanya Robinson
IE Managing Editor

Early in 2022, Mayor Bruce Harrell announced a plan to intensify police presence at the crime “hot-spot” of 12th and Jackson, which is a site of drug use, drug sales, and an informal market of cheap goods, including stolen goods. The strategy included a mobile police precinct and more regular patrols. Harrell also intentionally included 12th and Jackson among the areas his April 2023 Downtown Activation Plan will focus on.

Mayor Harrell said at an August 25 Ethnic Media Roundtable that he is still confident in the city’s long term strategy on 12th and Jackson, even if some in the neighborhood would like to see quicker changes in the area, or a crackdown on drug use, drug dealing, and sales of stolen goods in the area.

“The first thing we have to recognize is how bad the problem is,” Harrell said during the briefing for representatives of ethnic media outlets in the Seattle area attended by the *International Examiner*. “There’s fencing of stolen goods, there’s drug use, there’s drug dealing, there are people who have absolutely lost their way. And there are store owners that are in on it as well.”

“What we’re trying to do is create a healthy gem in that area,” Harrell continued. “What we’re trying to do is reach that balance of having effective policing, training, education, health treatment, and not decimate an area where there’s a guns blazing approach, but a compassionate approach.”

Harrell said police officers are doing community outreach in the area, and the city is working with community-based organizations. Harrell acknowledged that the large numbers of people using drugs in the area is “staggering.”

“People get impatient, they want immediate results. I want sustainable results, I want quick action and sustainable action,” Harrell said. “We feel pretty good that our downtown activation plan will help reset community norms.”

Harrell said a combination of hiring more police officers, policing strategies, and drug treatment strategies will “get a better result here in the near future. But I will tell you, it’s really tough work.” Harrell added that the city is considering investing in certain capital projects to build housing in the area, which he said could improve the area’s health and safety.

Tin Pak contributed reporting. ■

YOUR OPINION COUNTS

We are still looking for a community contributor to write about their perspective on the race for the City Council District 2, which represents the CID and much of South Seattle. We are specifically looking for a writer who supports the campaign of Tanya Woo, as we have already obtained a piece in support of Councilmember Morales. The piece should answer: Why do you support your candidate, and why are they the only choice to represent the CID? Email editor@iexaminer.org if interested.

Local editor Sonali Kolhatkar’s new book unpacks racial bias in corporate media

By Nalini Iyer
IE Contributor

Rising Up is a slender book in which Sonali Kolhatkar succinctly makes the argument that stories have the power to make social change.

She begins by outlining how people of color encounter racism in everyday life by sharing an experience she had at a grocery store with an angry white man who accused her of “driving like an Asian” as she was pushing her 4-year-old around the store in a cart. This powerful opening narrative demonstrates how often people of color deal with racism while going about their everyday lives.

Kolhatkar is known for her weekly TV and radio show *Rising Up* with Sonali and she also serves as racial justice editor for Yes! Magazine. This book grew out of her journalistic work and nearly two decades of material that she’s collected on social movements.

In the first three chapters, she outlines the racial bias in corporate media, including liberal media like NPR and The New York Times and critiques Hollywood’s racialized narratives of crime. In the last three chapters, she focuses on how individuals and activists such as the Black Lives Matter Movement are changing the narrative one person at a time. She highlights such moments as #OscarsSoWhite, the formation of Black Twitter, and Darnella Frazer’s video of the George Floyd murder as examples of such change.

Kolhatkar’s book covers familiar territory for those of us engaged in social justice work and who, as people of color, have experienced racial incidents or struggled with media bias. The clear prose, the succinct coverage of topics, and the brevity of the book make this a useful primer to explore. It should be particularly suitable for book groups, activist groups, and high school/college students interested in exploring media bias and seeking change.

Kolhatkar initially had no plans for *Rising Up*, but when City Lights Booksellers & Publishers approached her following the Jan. 6, 2020 events to consciously create more opportunities to promote racial justice, things changed. She was reluctant at first, noting that she does not identify as an activist/organizer, but as a storyteller who amplifies the work of others. She sees her role as telling the stories of these racial justice movements.

We discussed racial bias found in corporate media, and I wondered if independent media’s limited reach impacted its influence. Kolhatkar readily agreed that independent media does not have the reach of corporate media, but that where it excels is in pressuring corporate media to be more radical in its coverage.

In *Rising Up*, she writes on how independent media influenced the mainstream to drop the term “illegal” immigrant from its reportage.

One of the challenges for an author of such a book is that of audience.

To many of us who consume liberal corporate media and/or independent media, *Rising Up* covers familiar ground and deepens our thinking. However, the followers of right-wing media will not read this book even if folks like me believe they desperately need to.

Kolhatkar noted that her audience is anybody who believes that we need a multiracial democracy for the United States to survive and thrive. This book is a resource for such readers. She said that right wing politicians sell a fear-based narrative about the U.S. being on the brink of disaster, and seek to enforce policy based on such fear.

Kolhatkar offers an alternative approach and wants to tell stories of racial justice because “when one of us is not free, no one is free.” Our story — narratives centering communities of color — is based on “joy and striving for better,” not fear and anxiety.

Kolhatkar writes extensively about the Black Lives Matter movement, and I asked her to comment on the racialization of Asian Americans in the media.

“As Asian Americans we occupy a tenuous space in a white supremacist nation. We have some advantages and are spared some of the worst violence that is reserved for Black people and Indigenous people but we are very much Otherized,” she said.

White supremacy turns Asian Americans into a racial “wedge,” such as with the recent affirmative action in college admissions case. Kolhatkar spoke candidly about anti-Blackness, casteism, and colorism that plague Asian American communities and how that prevents us from being in solidarity with other marginalized groups.

She added that she sees the younger generation of Asian Americans offering hope in these areas, observing that they are more willing to have conversations across racial lines with other communities of color and to discuss questions of gender and sexuality more openly.

What is striking about Kolhatkar is her optimism. She believes in solutions journalism and cites Yes! Magazine as an example and rejects crisis journalism that fosters cynicism. She cites many examples of grassroots change occurring because of the work of racial justice activists who are changing the narrative one story at a time and one person at a time.

Sonali Kolhatkar has a story to tell and she tells it well. She knows her audience and is passionate about her ideals for fostering a multiracial society where everyone can thrive. Her work is thought-provoking and talking with her was a warm and wonderful experience. Her optimism is infectious. ■

IE ARTS

Composer Jackie An explores addiction and recovery in new string trio composition, to perform September 9

By Roxanne Ray
IE Contributor

Addiction and recovery are struggles common to many artists, and violinist and composer Jackie An is included in this number. But rather than keep her journey toward recovery private, as many do, An has decided to make it the focus of her current artistic project, a foray into composing music.

Her composition *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Addict* is a string trio, to be performed in Seattle on September 9 by herself on violin, along with cellist Lori Goldston and violinist Heather Bentley. The performance is part of NonSequr's NonSeq series curated by Michaud Savage.

This composition is based on An's personal experience, as she has felt called to bear witness to her past. "Largely, I've described my addiction recovery through language, either speaking or writing in a recovery context," said An. "The thing that's so beautiful about strings is that they're lyrical in nature and also able to capture textures that are challenging-guttural, grating, shrieking, so music can communicate in animal language that the non-verbal brain connects with."

During her recovery, An found that suppression and denial did not work. "I imagine the process of writing this string trio is similar to what writing a memoir feels like," she said. "I went through old journals and even an old email account. It was excruciating at times to feel the distress radiating off of the page."

But developing this composition was not necessarily foreordained after Savage contacted An about participating in the NonSeq series. "He gave me a list of performers he thought might be a good fit for my work," An said. "The first time we all met up in person, to discuss some of the ideas that I had, it was Michaud, Heather, Lori, and myself sitting in a circle in Lori's living room. Lori was like, 'You can make this about you and what you want for yourself as a musician.'"

For An, this felt like an intervention. "I'm happy to say that this period in my life is the safest I have ever felt in my body," she shared. "As a result, I'm actually able to metabolize the emotional impact of a lot of intense events that have occurred in my life."

An's rehearsal process has been to build confidence as a composer and create connections with her musicians. "The relational component of collaboration is so important to me," she said. "With time, the lens of sobriety, a trauma-informed framework, and a lot more support, I have a new perspective that holds more room for understanding the complexity and gravity of what I was going through."

To do this, An drew upon musical skills



A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Addict will be performed on Sept. 9 • Photo by Steven Miller

built since childhood, watching both her siblings play violin and piano.

When An became school-aged, she began studying violin with Willa Deane Howells and piano with Martha Harrison Hays. But this passion faded out during An's teenage years.

"After high school, I did not go to conservatory, as it did not occur to me I was a musician, or that I had a vital, life-preserving need to play music," she said. "Music found me again in my mid-twenties, when I was emotionally unwell and my nervous system was wrecked."

Then reconnection came out of the blue when a friend set her up on a blind date. Feeling socially anxious, she brought her violin to the party they were meeting at because she was told that this "friend group liked to play Bob Dylan and other folksy stuff."

"In the capitalist technocracy we find ourselves in, we've been discouraged to have a relationship with our body that isn't mediated by some consumable good," she explained. "It's a powerful stand to even want to be in the body."

An found this new setting very liberating having grown up in a risk-averse environment, hostile to making mistakes. In addiction recovery, as well as her growth as an artist, An now understands that mistake-making is an important part of nurturing growth, expression, and creativity.

As an immigrant, An had felt intense pressure to assimilate and conform.

"Once I discovered, seemingly by accident, that I could play music in a self-generated way, I felt lucky to have been asked to join different collaborations as I connected with people that I met through making music," she said. "Each project I have been involved with has been practice for the next, so the transition from accompanying a guitarist playing a Bob Dylan at an open mic night evolves into a West Coast tour in a doom folk band, to a studio residency with a modern ballet company, to drone orchestra, seems like the incremental progression necessary for me to become willing to consider myself to be a musician, let alone an artist."

In addition to her work in music, An is also a Somatic Educator in the tradition of Thomas Hanna, thanks to her early violin teacher Willa Deane Howells.

An believes it's important to be proactive about bodily health. "In the capitalist technocracy we find ourselves in, we've been discouraged to have a relationship with our body that isn't mediated by some consumable good," she explained. "It's a powerful stand to even want to be in the body, when the world we live in encourages self-loathing and shame of the body."

She states that Hanna Somatic Education uses subtle and gentle movement to help the brain surrender old habits of tension. "I think of it as being a couples counselor for body and brain, creating cooperation and communication out of conflict and pain," she said.

"So rather than seeing the body and brain as two individual entities at odds with each other, this approach encourages the individual to see their soma as the harmonious relationship of bodymind."

Likewise, in her music, An said she is working from her gut. "The challenge in *A Portrait of An Artist as a Young Addict* is I had to how to convey my creative instinct to others," she said. "I'm typically doing improv with my loop pedal, improv

with another musician, or accompanying a dancer, so being in a lead creative role is one of the biggest creative jumps I've had to make in a very long time."

Following the September 9th performance, there will be a post-show talkback hosted by writer and dramaturg Jesse Roth. An hopes the talkback will be a form of community.

"In a world littered with all the intrusive content we're forced to gorge ourselves on," she said. "iLvt's a reclamation of our humanity to make an old-fashioned energetic vortex by experiencing live art together."

A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Addict will be performed on September 9 at Chapel Performance Space at Good Shepherd Center, 4649 Sunnyside Ave. N, 4th floor, Seattle. ■

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A preview of Northwest Film Forum's 26th Annual Local Sightings Film Festival

By Perry Meas
IE Contributor

Local Sightings Film Festival is Seattle's only festival dedicated to Pacific Northwest films and filmmakers, from WA, OR, AK, ID, MT, BC, and the Yukon.

She Marches in Chinatown (2023)

She Marches in Chinatown (2023) by Director Della Chen investigates the history, contemporary present, and future of the Seattle Chinese Girls Community Drill Team (SCGCDT).

Every summer, dozens of Chinese American girls parade in-step to thundering drums in vibrant gold-vermillion Cantonese opera costumes. Onlookers cheer and swell with pride when the young performers masterfully execute elaborate foot drills. Part performance, part military-esque exercise, the drill team has been a mainstay in the Seattle Chinese community for over 70 years. Behind the strict movements and dark sunglasses are young people excited to be authentically themselves and authentically Chinese.

Chen introduces us to the current members and alumni as they prepare for the 2022 Seafair Parade. This year's march will be an important one as the team makes a triumphant return since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. The documentary, the first of its kind about the SCGCDT, mixes contemporary footage with archival imagery and interviews of team alumni.

Seattle Chinese Girls Community Drill Team was founded in 1952 by former city councilwoman Ruby Chow and a group of Chinese American women called The Chi-ettes with the aim of improving relations between Chinese Americans and the wider Seattle community. In archival footage and interviews, Chow shares how The Chi-ettes got their start from an idea of giving back to the community. Chow's presence as an indomitable Chinese American woman and Seattle community leader inspires the drill team women of all generations — everyone takes time to pay homage to Auntie Ruby.

The team spans many generations; it's a place for youth and elders to come together in solidarity. Young members affectionately praise their aunts as powerful role models that helped them forge ahead and accept themselves as Chinese people. Together, they share moments of joy and camaraderie. Both sides of the generational line have things to teach each other.

Cheryl Chow, the late Seattle city councilwoman and Ruby Chow's daughter, describes how she took the team into new directions after inheriting the project from her mother. As a queer Chinese woman, Cheryl Chow showed the next generation of young members that they too have a place on the drill team and can authentically be themselves while representing their community.

Unfortunately there is a big historical part of the team's origins that the documentary did not touch on. Chow and others began developing the idea for the SCGCDT in 1951. By then, the Chinese People's Volunteer Army had entered the Korean War against U.S.-led forces and turned the tide for the communist movement in Korea. American and western anxieties over worldwide anti-colonial and communist revolutions reached an all-time high. Chinese in America were already subject to intense scrutiny and discrimination since the preceding 19th century, but this repression once again entered a new stage, with Americans and the U.S. government scrutinizing Chinese people as a potential fifth-column for domestic leftist and anti-racist movements.

Chinese people across America were forced to pledge loyalty to the United States or be subjected to intense harassment, surveillance, and political violence. The Chinese American community ruptured along lines of support for the Chinese Nationalist or Communist parties. The drill team developed in this climate of Cold War McCarthyism as a gesture of goodwill between Chinese in America and their increasingly hostile adopted

nation, as well as amidst the splits within the Chinese American community along political lines.

While the film points to historic anti-Chinese exclusion and expulsion from Seattle, how the Seattle Asian American community has grappled with COVID-19, and the rise of anti-Asian violence and discrimination, the film does not explicitly explore this historical throughline of Cold

At the same time, they draw upon the strength of the community to pull together and resist repression as inspiration to carry forward to the 2022 parade march. It's in this developing backdrop that the drill team remains an important part of the Seattle community, and a place for young Chinese women in America to find solidarity and belonging in an increasingly hostile environment to anything Chinese or Asian.

The origins of the team strongly mirror our present situation, and we should appreciate the similarities and differences of then and now. The film shows how the team has evolved since its founding to reflect the dynamic makeup of Chinese and Asians in America. The team today reflects the widespread acceptance of LGBTQIA+ Asian Americans and membership is open to non-Chinese and those with mixed ancestry alike.

We also see the resilience of the CID, surviving as a focal-point of the Seattle Asian diaspora community despite racism, repression, and geographical displacement. *She Marches in Chinatown* will be an important watch for anyone interested in the history and future of Chinese and Asian people in America. As our beloved CID faces intense political and economic struggles both outside and within the neighborhood, we ought to consider how the SCGCDT will continue to evolve. History is marching forward, and so too are the women of the Seattle Community Girls Drill Team.

Wok Hei (2023)

A good wok's seasoning can tell a thousand stories, each layer carrying a small legacy of every dish that came before it.

For many families, a wok is something to be preserved and passed down generations — an unbroken chain of history that ties us to the past and present. In *Wok Hei*

LOCAL SIGHTINGS: Continued on page 22 . . .



Seattle Chinese Girls Community Drill Team • Courtesy

War politics that brought Chow and others to form the SCGCDR as a way of changing the public image of Chinese Americans amidst widespread repression of the Asian Americans and the American Left. This omission felt like a missed opportunity to set a clear historical grounding.

Today, with the reorientation of the U.S. military toward the Asian continent, ongoing anti-Chinese fear-mongering following the pandemic, and terrifying prospects of a new Cold War between China and the U.S., the impetus for the SCGCDR arises yet again. And it's in this historical moment that the girls of the drill team find themselves as subjects as they recall the wave of anti-Asian attacks on the Chinatown International District (CID) and upon Chinese and Asian people in America.



A still from *She Marches in Chinatown* (2023) by Della Chen • Courtesy



A still from *Wok Hei* (2023) by Joel Salaysay • Courtesy

IE ARTS

Sequoia Nagamatsu's vastness of time, the human condition

By Roxanne Ray
IE Contributor

As the COVID-19 pandemic developed new chapters, writers such as Sequoia Nagamatsu imagined what would come next. In his book *How High We Go In the Dark*, which was shortlisted for the Waterstones Debut Fiction Prize, the Ursula K. Le Guin Fiction Prize, and the Barnes & Noble Discover Prize, among others, Nagamatsu explores how a plague born of climate change would affect a wide range of individuals of varying ages, genders, and economic classes.

But Nagamatsu shared that the pandemic at the heart of this book only came later in his creative process.

"The book was written over many years but was first really just isolated, stand-alone story explorations of grief and alternative funerary practices," he said. "Since the project spanned many years and was written in a non-linear manner, the revision process was quite extensive and almost puzzle-like."

In that sense, Nagamatsu's book mirrors his writing process in its vastness of time. "The first chapter, for instance, was one of the last chapters I wrote and there was one chapter that has roots dating back to 2009," he said. "I spent a considerable amount of time thinking about the connections between chapters, characters, and time periods, how the world evolved over generations."

Since the book's publication last year, Nagamatsu has appreciated a wide range of responses. "Readers are really in the driver's seat once a novel is published," he said. "What I came to realize is that *How High We Go in the Dark* is a part of COVID conversations, it is pandemic literature in a way."

He initially resisted this description of his work. "I never saw *How High We Go in the Dark* as being about a virus," he said. "Despite my initial intentions, *How High We Go in the Dark* is a narrative that can be cathartic in our own pandemic. It can be a way to reflect on our own experiences."

Nagamatsu's interest in science fiction hails from his childhood, when he found *Contact* by Carl Sagan to be influential.

"I encountered it when I was maybe twelve and it was something that I found to be deeply human while ticking off the boxes of high concept, yet somewhat grounded, science-fiction," he said. "It was the sort of thing I dreamed of writing one day, and I think I may have a book-length space opera of sorts in me one day."

He began writing at an early age as well. "I started out making my own handmade tabloids with crayons and markers," he said.

"My grandmother always had these grocery store register magazines around, and I honestly became fascinated with relationships in trouble, gossip, the constant



Sequoia Nagamatsu, author of *How High We Go in the Dark* • Courtesy

affairs, failure to find happiness despite having it all."

His interest in the human condition and how communities navigate their spaces led him to earn a BA in anthropology at Grinnell College, but he always gravitated back to the written word. "My first serious forays into writing began when I was living in Japan," he said. "Serious as in I want this to maybe be a career, go to grad school, send things out for publication."

While teaching English in Japan, Nagamatsu also wrote every day after work. "I was lucky to find an online community of accomplished writers, some rising stars really, who really helped encourage my early efforts," he said, "and these relationships also led to my first short story publications."

"Nagamatsu has appreciated a wide range of responses. 'Readers are really in the driver's seat once a novel is published,' he said. 'What I came to realize is that *How High We Go in the Dark* is a part of COVID conversations, it is pandemic literature in a way.'"

He then earned an MFA in Creative Writing from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. "An MFA is really just time to be in a community of other writers, read and analyze books deeply, and figure out your voice," he said. "By the time I entered my MFA program I had already published a fair amount

and think I had a pretty decent sense of my voice and stylistic directions, but it was a crucial time to encounter books I wouldn't have found on my own, try new things, and perhaps most importantly begin inserting myself more deeply with the larger writing community."

Now, as an associate professor at St. Olaf College teaching writing, Nagamatsu encourages his students to connect to the wider literary community and to practice giving more than they take. "While the act of writing is often solitary, nobody really succeeds as a published writer by themselves," he advised. "Networks and communities can be very important not only for professional advice, connections, and feedback, but it's important that other writers see that you are supportive of contemporaries, that you're working just as hard to be a good literary citizen as it were as you are on your own manuscripts. So many of my opportunities have come from forming friendships with other writers."

Looking ahead, Nagamatsu will be as busy as he advises his students to be, both in reading and watching media widely, and in launching his own new projects. "I'm working on another book for the same publishers," he said, "and starting to develop yet another book with my wife who is also a writer."

And if that wasn't enough, this Minneapolis resident also has solid connections to the Pacific Northwest, teaching in the low-residency MFA in Creative Writing at Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma. "Some of my immediate family has lived in the Seattle and upper Puget Sound area for decades," he said. "I can't pretend to navigate like a local, but I know how to get around better than your typical tourist." ■

How High We Go In The Dark is a decade-defining sci-fi debut

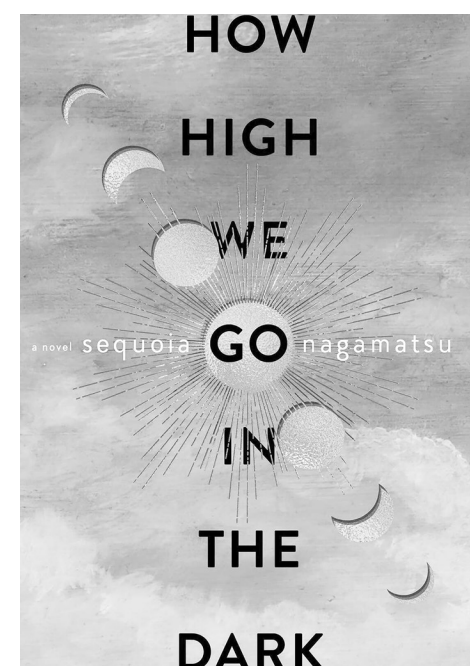
By Demetri Kissel
IE Contributor

The pandemic of the last few years was life changing for the entire world. As fiction is written attempting to deal with this period, Sequoia Nagamatsu's *How High We Go In The Dark* should stand as a role model and aspirational work.

How High We Go In The Dark tells a long arc of human salvation, after the "Arctic Plague" was released due to climate catastrophe in 2030, through a series of vignettes. Each chapter follows a different protagonist and shows a different face to the suffering of the time, though characters throughout return in surprising ways). The sections also hold a strong theme of humanity's goodness, love for neighbors, and our ability to make hope for the future a life saving reality.

Stem cell experimentation gives a pig the power of human speech, and allows a grieving scientist to finally say goodbye to his son. A robo-dog carries the last recording of a mother singing, and is the only connection a grieving father still has to his distant son. A singularity resting in a man's head might hold the secret to space travel, and a cure to the plague. A forensic scientist studies a slowly dying and decaying patient, and shares music with him. A widowed painter and her granddaughter embark on a centuries-long space trip to find a new home for humanity. The seed of Earth is planted and nurtured. The characters feel so much like real people that I have mourned them.

This book terrified me, enchanted me, made me weep for joy and sob from grief. Most of all, *How High We Go In The Dark* filled me with love for the world we have and the hope that we can still save it. This is an absolute 2023 must-read. ■



IE ELECTION

DISTRICT 2: Continued from page 4. . .

the state. We had people who were driving in from Tacoma, Vashon Island, to come and to walk the streets of the CID and provide hope and support for many community members there, especially to our seniors, at that time, when all of these videos of anti-Asian attacks are happening, especially in our senior population.

It was really surprising to see how much of that affected the mentality of our senior population, many did not come out after 4 p.m. And, you know, we saw that impact when seniors walked around the parking lot next to their apartments in groups because they were fearful to leave the vicinity of their homes.

Another big moment was the expansion of the SoDo shelter. That was a really interesting moment of time because we were advocating, not for the closure of that shelter, but we were advocating for a seat at the table. We were advocating to be heard for engagement and for translation services and information and use of the Racial Equity Toolkit.

It was really interesting to see the interaction between how we were painted as anti-shelter when that was not the reason why we wanted conversation and dialogue between the City and the County because of course, you know, this fell with a whole line of other 100 projects that the community was not consulted with. So it's just interesting how our voices were portrayed in the media, and how important it was for us to own our narrative and to tell our narrative and our stories, because if we don't tell it, others will, and it's not our truth or lived experiences. That made me realize that there is still a lot of misconception regarding the Asian American, Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander community. It's important that we get our voices out there, we have to speak up and just represent ourselves.

IE: Public safety has been a longstanding concern in the neighborhood, particularly Little Saigon. Do you have any new ideas for how the City could address this?

TM: This is a complex issue. There are lots of overlapping crises going on and so I think looking at alternative crisis response tools, making sure that we are actively reaching out to the organizations that are in the CID is sort of the first step, right? We have actively been doing that. There are, I think, 15 organizations that we have spoken to, we're working with, to come together and figure out what kind of policy change we need to be advancing. And that said, we know that there are alternative crisis responses that we need.

There are things like the STAR [Support Team Assisted Response] program, in Denver, or CAHOOTS [Crisis Assistance Helping Out On The Streets], all of the things that can provide a non-armed officer response to people who are experiencing a crisis. That's something that we've been trying to do in the city for three years now. We're pushing, pushing the executive to make sure that these sort of really proven, evidence-based solutions are implemented here.

There's also community-based violence intervention. We've seen those sorts of programs like Community Passageways, the Southeast Safety Network, corner greeters down in Rainier Beach. These programs are really effective. I know that folks in the CID are interested in doing something similar. So helping create that kind of a model there is something that we've heard from folks. It's important to understand that you can't just pick up a model and move it over there. It's very organic, so helping understand how to create something like that is going to be important.

Because so much of what we're seeing, particularly in Little Saigon and the CID, is related to substance use, you know, the fentanyl crisis, I think the levee that we just passed at the county level is going to be an important opportunity to build places where these folks need to go in order to access treatment, and access the kind of services that can help move them off of their addiction. There are many, many steps that need to be taken and we're pushing on all fronts.

"It was really surprising to see how much of that affected the mentality of our senior population, many did not come out after 4 p.m. And, you know, we saw that impact when seniors walked around the parking lot next to their apartments in groups because they were fearful."

TW: I do have a plan [released September 5]. This plan really emphasizes community engagement, empowerment. And it's kind of a multi-step plan. It's a community action plan for resilience and empowerment. How do we come up with opportunities for young people, resources for mental health and conflict resolution, economic development, job creation? These are the main themes. There's a couple of community groups, we come together and we're meeting to talk about a plan moving forward of what we would like to see in the area of 12th and Jackson, and to ask the city for funding, and to see what happens, that plan is not ready yet. We're still getting quotes and putting it together.

It's nothing new. It's all things that we've been saying, like we would like to see more outreach and engagement in that area, we would like to see full time ambassadors. The Community Watch Group that I'm a part of, we go out there twice a week, and we try to build that trust, build those relationships, try to connect people to resources, but we only do it in the evening time for about two hours. And there are so many stories I can tell you about the work that we're doing.

Basically the bottom line is we need more of this work being done, during the day. It

needs to be done by people who are being supported and paid, and not by volunteers, people with either lived experience or training to be able to connect with where people are at, develop that trust, to get people to go inside and to really attend to the root cause of why people are out there.

I know from my experiences at 12th and Jackson, the issue has kind of moved, it's shifted. It's more fentanyl, versus, you know, what we've been seeing in the past, where it's mostly people who are gathering there from our unhoused community. This is people with addiction. It's really distressing because we've seen a lot of people overdosing and a lot of people who come there specifically to buy and sell fentanyl. All ages, not just unhoused people, young adults coming in from transit, elders coming in because they can't afford other drugs.

We also see a large population of our seniors going up there because they can buy cheap goods. And that kind of, unfortunately, fuels 12th and Jackson. How do we address all these issues in a culturally-competent way, with all of our community partners? I hope when community groups are ready to release their plan that the city will listen.

IE: Last year, after pressure from the CID community, King County backed down from expanding new shelter and services for people experiencing homelessness in SoDo at the edge of the CID. What is your takeaway from the way this unfolded? What is its significance or lessons learned?

TM: Well, like I was saying before, I absolutely understand why people were so frustrated. This is a community that has repeatedly had big projects landed on them without a whole lot of input, without a lot of ability to have a say in what the project looks like. So, I do think that the County could have done a much better job at having deeper conversations with the community. It's resulted in a really confusing process, and it created division, and that harms community, when people are fighting.

It was a lesson for all of us, all jurisdictional levels, to make sure that we're engaging with community as early as possible, and really understanding how to reduce harm. And really look at how, you know, in this particular case, what we can do to provide the kind of wraparound behavioral health services that we know are still needed in the neighborhood.

They don't all have to go into the CID, that's for sure. And we know that there are communities across the county that really have to step up and share in the responsibility of addressing this crisis. All that to say, I understand why folks in the neighborhood were frustrated by the location and the way that process unfolded. We still need to make sure that the folks who are suffering from behavioral health crises or from substance use disorder, are getting the access to services that they need, somewhere. That's part of the work that we need to be doing with the County.

TW: King County approved the shelter expansion back in May [2022], did not tell community until September [2022]. I don't think a lot of people realize that the shel-

ter has been open since, I believe, 2021 or 2020. It's been open for a couple of years. I mean, it's operational, it's in place right now. I don't think we realized it was there. And with the Good Neighbor Agreement, which by Seattle City ordinance, should have been in place when that shelter opened. We were not anti-shelter, we just wanted a seat at the table. We wanted to address some of these issues that our unhoused community was seeing, because as Seattle Police Department (SPD) has said, I think there were about seven homicides in the CID last year. All but one happened within the encampments.

So we were concerned for our unhoused neighbors, for their safety, because people were dying. Not only that, but you know, this year, all those homicides are at zero. And so we wanted a public safety plan, and we wanted to work with the Salvation Army shelter, with King County, with the City of Seattle, as well as with community to come up with a public safety plan that would address everybody's concerns.

We wanted to be heard and we didn't feel like that was happening. We were a community in crisis and no one showed up for us, so we organized protests every single week. We went to King County Council meetings and to Seattle City Council meetings, and organized everybody to go to these meetings. We had requested translators in advance and in some instances, we were told that no translators were available so we had to bring our own.

In some instances, we found out that translation only goes one way. It goes towards council members and not back to communities. The community was sitting there not understanding what's going on, and didn't know how to respond, and how to interact or get involved in the political process. So a lot of that was education, to our community, seniors, small businesses, this is how you need to be heard. And so just realizing there are a lot of barriers in place for people of color, where English is not the first language, to interact with government processes. I mean, the Racial Equity Toolkit was definitely not being followed in this instance.

IE: According to the King County Medical Examiner's Office, Seattle's downtown area, including the CID, is where overdose rates are highest in the county. Do you think that Mayor Harrell's Downtown Activation Plan adequately addresses this public health issue? And if not, what other measures would you want to see implemented?

TM: What we are experiencing is overlapping crises. The way we address some of the things that are happening downtown, is, you know, not to arrest people who are experiencing poverty or are having a crisis. I mean, the mayor himself said that. When you see somebody who is suffering from a substance use disorder, they are sick. And what he said is: 'We're not going to put people in jail, or we're not going to fill our jails with sick people,' something like that. So I

DISTRICT 2: Continued on page 20. . .

FRIENDS OF WATERFRONT SEATTLE

Seattle's Waterfront: A place filled with stories is getting an exciting new chapter in Waterfront Park

By Joy Shigaki

Friends of Waterfront Seattle

Seattle's waterfront is filled with many stories both told and untold. Since time immemorial, the Duwamish, Suquamish, Stillaguamish, and Muckleshoot People have resided here, fostering community on these shores and continuing to thrive to this day. The waterfront was also a place where ancestors from a myriad of backgrounds, cultures, and nationalities worked to build new lives after leaving the homes they once knew behind. It's been home to some of the darkest histories of exclusion, hate, and harm in this city. The waterfront has also been a place where people have come together to share, trade, and build new communities based in solidarity and resilience.

I have fond memories visiting the waterfront over the years. On visits with my family, we'd park under the Viaduct, spend sunny (and sometimes gloomy) summer days popping into local stores and restaurants, looking for trinkets at the Old Curiosity Shop, diving into fish and chips at Ivars, and taking in the smells of the Salish Sea. Even then, I remember feeling a sense of connection to the beauty and awe of this place, a sentiment shared by so many in this city. As an adult, I would take walks along the waterfront after work, meet friends for a bite, and breathe in the crisp air, grounding myself in this familiar and quintessentially Seattle place.

As President & CEO of Friends of Waterfront Seattle, I'm thrilled about this historic moment for our city Waterfront Park comes to life to be place of joy, wonder, and connection to nature and to one another. Waterfront Park will stretch 20 acres from the stadiums district of Pioneer Square all the way up to Belltown. The park, set to fully open in 2025, will include sweeping fea-

tures like Overlook Walk, a 1-acre elevated area that will have stunning view and will connect you from Pike Place Market down to the waterfront, new spaces to play like an aquatic themed playground, and a wide, accessible pedestrian promenade that will span the waterfront surrounded by a beautiful palette of plants, shrubs, and trees. As a non-profit we are providing the leadership to manage, program and activate, fundraise, and invest in public safety for this new park.

Part of this civic effort is improving neighborhood connections to the waterfront, including from the Chinatown International District (CID). Waterfront Park will provide even greater access to nature, play, and park space for CID and downtown residents. Our goal is to ensure Waterfront Park is accessible to all communities across the city.

I invite you to take the 15-minute walk from the CID (straight down Jackson and take a right) to the newly-opened Pioneer Square Habitat Beach to experience a slice of natural shoreline where you can even touch the water. Or hop on the free Waterfront Shuttle at King Street Station to check out a free event at Pier 62 held by one of our many community partners. Waterfront Park is already becoming a place of significance and connection for many communities in this city. I hope you'll feel the same way.

I know Waterfront Park will continue to draw us together and be a place for more connections and memories. This amazing new chapter for the waterfront will provide a beautiful, safe, and welcoming space that will foster the kinds of stories that will be told for generations.

Thank you,

Joy ■

Making this Place: Black Oral History of the Seattle Waterfront

A new oral history project is collecting underreported stories and narratives from Seattle's multicultural waterfront

By Valerie Schloredt

Friends of Waterfront Seattle

History is selective, says Jill Freidberg. "The histories that are preserved, that are valued, the voices that are valued, leave out a great deal." As a documentary filmmaker and oral historian, Freidberg preserves narratives that might otherwise be obscured or erased. At Wa Na Wari, the Black cultural center Freidberg co-founded in Seattle's Central District, she's learned how people in this once-redlined, now-gentrifying neighborhood created programs and innovations that rippled out to benefit and shape all of Seattle. "These are really important narratives," she said, "that the whole city could be learning from."

The Seattle Black Spatial Histories Institute (SBSHI) is an oral history training program at Wa Na Wari that aims to collect these important narratives, including stories about Black and Indigenous people on the waterfront. This is history you didn't learn in school, says Marie Kidhe, director of community relations for Friends of Waterfront Seattle, which is supporting the project. They're narratives that "center multicultural collaboration so that folks can understand people have been here at the waterfront. They've been on the waterfront and doing business and living and thriving and having ownership in the waterfront." She believes presenting these stories will help displaced communities "understand their ownership of the waterfront, and in particular Waterfront Park, so that they'll feel welcomed and understand that the space is just as much theirs as anyone else's."

Sierra Parsons, one of the Institute's first cohort of oral history fellows, came to the Institute from a community organizing background rooted in the Rainier Beach neighborhood. She's grateful for the insight she gained from interviewing longshore workers about their jobs and Black labor organizing on the waterfront. "It really helped to better orient me to what being a port city means and what it meant for Black folks over the last 100 years. Coming into the project, I didn't know a lot about labor unions, the history of that organizing in Seattle, and the roles that Black folks played in moving unions forward and giving workers better rights. And I also didn't fully understand how Black folks were excluded from the workforce on the waterfront for so long."

Parsons' interview with Suquamish elder Marilyn Wandrey, who has Black and Indigenous heritage, provided another rich perspective. "As an Indigenous person, and as a tribal elder, her experience

is so different from how the waterfront is explained by some of the longshoremen that I interviewed. Like her description of being the captain of the Raven canoe and seeing huge container ships passing by, coming so close that people in the canoe thought they were near death."

Wandrey described longing to be on the water and her first canoe journey here: <http://wpsea.org/wandrey>

Ricky Reyes knew something about organized labor before becoming a SBSHI fellow—his father had a union job and Reyes majored in public affairs in college. But the oral history interviews offered him unique insights: from the Farrisons, a multigenerational family of dock workers in ILWU (International Longshore and Warehouse Union), and from Gabriel Prawl, the first African American president of ILWU Local 52. "I think the big thing with oral history is that there's a pretty specific focus on spatiality. A lot of times folks will ask in interviews, 'What happened, when did that happen?' But with oral history, we got to dive deep into really understanding what it looked like and what it felt like. And what was important about being in the union hall in the '90s or being by the docks in the '60s and '70s."

Reflecting on the skills she honed through the fellowship, Parsons said, "I realize I actually listen differently now. When people are talking, even in conversation, I feel more attuned, almost, after being trained in oral history."

Kim Farrison on visiting the docks as a child and imagining working on the waterfront: <http://wpsea.org/farrison>

The first SBSHI fellowships began during COVID-19 social distancing, so training was virtual in the first year of the two-year program, said Freidberg. That was a disadvantage in loss of in-person learning but something of an opportunity, too, as the first cohort of trainees did online training



Image by James Corner Field Operations • Courtesy of the City of Seattle

MAKING THIS PLACE: Continued on page 13. . .

FRIENDS OF WATERFRONT SEATTLE

MAKING THIS PLACE: Continued from page 12...

workshops with eminent Black historians from around the country, “people who have been doing really serious oral history work for a long time.” Among the experts giving workshops were Kelly Elaine Navies of the Smithsonian African American Museum, Adrienne Cain Darough of Baylor University, and scholar-playwright Nikki Yeboah, who has just joined the University of Washington from San Jose State.

As well as taking workshops, the fellows read theories and methodologies of oral history and practiced interviewing techniques before going out in the field. Reflecting on the skills she honed through the fellowship, Parsons said, “I realize I actually listen differently now. When people are talking, even in conversation, I feel more attuned, almost, after being trained in oral history.”

Now the interviews she and Reyes did are ready to be presented to the public at “Tidelines to Timelines,” a storytelling event September 17 on Pier 62 hosted by Friends of Waterfront Seattle in partnership with Washington Trust for Historic Preservation, Wa Na Wari, Black Heritage Society of Washington State, Sea Potential, and Wing Luke Museum, with funding support from 4Culture. A waterfront histories library will launch on the Friends website this fall, and there will be an SBSHI exhibition of the cohort’s work at Wa Na

Wari in November. There are even plans for a zine by artist Eboni Wyatt based on the oral histories.

Both Reyes and Parsons plan to carry on doing oral history, and have new related projects lined up already. As the cycle continues with the next cohort of fellows, Reyes welcomes the capacity-building built into SBSHI’s programs, “where there will be more folks who are able to collect specifically Black history — about us, by us, and for us.”

In a dramatically growing city with major development and rapid change, it can be difficult to remember altered places and what living there was like even a few years ago. Kidhe stresses the importance of attaching history to stories of lived experience in a place — even when those places have changed due to gentrification and displacement. “Our memories are based in place and space,” she says. She grew up in the Central District, and said, “I know how that feels, to now look up and see so many places that were so impactful in my life no longer exist, and sometimes struggle trying to remember why this location is so special to me, or what was here at one time.”

Reyes said that every story he and Parsons collected mentions or represents many other people who worked on and defined Seattle’s waterfront. His hope is that listeners “just get an understanding of who some of those people are who made the waterfront what it is today.” ■

SNAPSHOT IN TIME



CIDBP (Chinatown International District Block Party), an annual and free grassroots community celebration of the next generation of Asian Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander American artists, music, food, and culture under the I-5 freeway took place on Aug. 26, 2023. Pictured here with the Mak Fai Lion Dancers are the CIDBP organizers. (From left to right): Ryan Catabay, Diana Ratsame, Carmen Hom, Tuyen Than, Jintana Lityoung, Le-Vy Craig, Josh Reisz, Blake Nakatsu, and Cory Castagno.

This all-ages celebration featured live music from local and out of state artists, visual arts, food vendors, arts & craft vendors, retail vendors, 21+ beer garden hosted by Hood Famous Cafe + bar, Pokemon competition hosted by Tabletop Village, Miles Galore Bike Quest by Center for Bike Repair, a car show, Wing Luke Museum I-5 Installation, and much more • Photo by Leo Carmona



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IE ARTS

Autocorrect Thinks I'm Dead by Deaf playwright Aimee Chou comes to Sound Theatre Company

By Roxanne Ray
IE Contributor

Local theatre group Sound Theatre Company, known for its emphasis on accessibility, is now presenting a new play by deaf playwright, Aimee Chou. *Autocorrect Thinks I'm Dead* is a bilingual world premiere presented in ASL and English at 12th Avenue Arts, a space that includes both full wheelchair accessibility and COVID-19 health protocols.

In *Autocorrect Thinks I'm Dead*, three deaf roommates must deal with mysterious messages received on a vintage typewriter phone (TTY) from Alexander Graham Bell, the Scottish-born inventor who patented the first telephone.

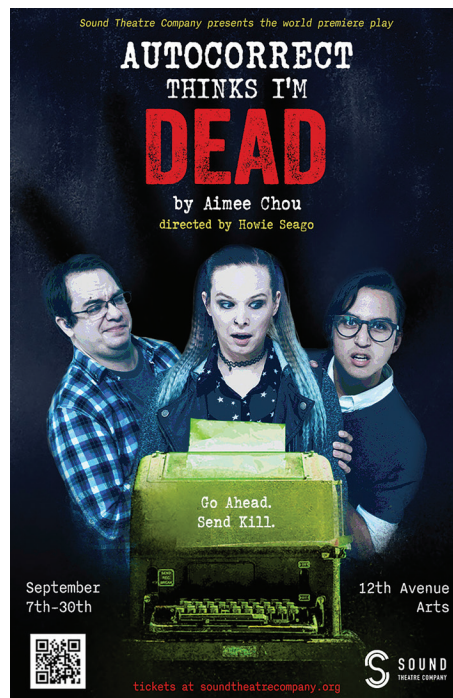
"I got the idea for this play in 2019 after reading a Facebook thread with Millennial and Generation-Xer Deaf friends reminiscing about their experiences with TTYs prior to the era of Sidekicks and iPhones," Chou said.

Growing up, Chou avoided her household's landline phone, despite the costs of being disconnected from communication. "This play was kind of a way for me to reimagine an experience that most of my peers had," she said. "I'm as scared of Ouija boards as I am of telephones, so I thought, wouldn't it be hilarious to compare how similar those are?"

Chou's play combines both horror and comedy. "Alexander Graham Bell, AGB for short, is often associated with trauma," she remarked. "That history is a rich source material for horror."

Meanwhile, humor is one of Chou's biggest coping tools.

"Hearing or deaf, we've all had a beet — I mean, beef — with autocorrect," she quipped. "So the universal experiences with technology turn an otherwise inside-baseball subject into something more universal, even to audiences who have no idea the man behind the telephone's invention was an outspoken eu-



genicist who viewed deaf people as the 'defective race.'"

Chou worked to balance the humor in her play against important subject matter. "It doesn't shy away from themes of possession, control, structural inequities, domestic violence, and did I mention linguistic oppression and linguistic exploitation?" she said. "When you have numerous people with intersectional identities in the room, it's impossible for their lived experiences not to impact storytelling approaches."

The Sound Theatre production features a majority-deaf and hard of hearing cast and creative team. "Luckily, Pork Filled Productions and Cafe Nordo had a staged reading program in March 2022," Chou recounted. "That's how Teresa from Sound Theatre stumbled upon this play."

Artistic Director Teresa Thuman brought in director Howie Seago to move

the play from page to stage. "I was so seduced by the play's title alone," Seago recalled. "I knew the playwright's brilliant mind, humor, perspectives, and creativity would create a totally unique play with fully-dimensional deaf characters who are not depicted as just being 'lost,' 'pitiful,' 'dumb,' or even overly heroic."

Chou found that developing the play over time with different theatre companies has improved it.

"Thanks to great workshopping feedback, I realized I was subconsciously overcompensating for the reality that deaf-centered stories are rarely produced, thus rarely seen, in the mainstream, and by Jove, I was gonna squish as many of them into the plot as possible," she admitted. "Telling myself there will be future opportunities to explore this other rabbit hole storyline was part of this process."

The current version of the play narrows down the characters to a cast of six, including actor Van Lang Pham who plays two roles in the Ensemble: Dr. Bale and a Missionary. "Bale is serious and conflicted, while the Missionary is jovial and excited about his work in spreading the word of God," Pham said. "Being able to play two very different types of characters in the same play is a fun challenge."

Pham is the only actor in the cast who is not fluent in ASL, but the team has worked to facilitate communication. "We have interpreters in the rehearsal room, and they've been really helpful from bridging that gap, but they won't be on stage with us when we open, so timing and picking up on cues for entrances and lines has been a really interesting experience for me," he said.

"The most important thing I've learned as a result is a significantly larger understanding of deaf culture, access needs, and experiences my castmates face on a daily basis."

All this has been to the benefit of

Sound Theatre company, according to Senior Marketing Manager Aaron Jin. "Sometimes, the scripted miscommunications happening onstage match the cross-cultural collaboration as we figure out how to work with each other behind the scenes," Jin said. "We are centering deaf artists in this show, which takes cultural humility and learning from hearing counterparts. Ultimately, it's going to make us a stronger company."

Despite Sound Theatre being the ideal home for Chou's play, as a playwright she still struggles with mixed feelings.

"There's the imposter syndrome that comes with being an Asian American, disabled woman who gets produced," she said. "One in five people in Seattle are Asian, yet there is still a CVS-receipt-length list of brilliant Asian playwrights that have yet to receive a full production in this city."

That challenge is compounded for deaf artists. "I'm aware of the 'hearing gaze,' the default audience member has the perspective of a hearing person," Chou said. "Know your audience" is practically the rule of law for any writer, but to be a deaf writer requires letting go of the rules, sometimes, even when every fiber of your conditioning tells you to play it safe."

But Chou received further motivation from a white paper on Deaf representation in the media. "A lot of great data points but this one particularly struck me, that fewer than one in six deaf people have ever attended a live stage show featuring deaf characters or deaf performers," she said.

And Chou says you don't have to be hard of hearing to appreciate the appeal of reaching out to past generations. "Hearing or deaf," she said, "we're all trying to connect with the other side."

AutoCorrect Thinks I'm Dead runs September 7 to 30 at 12th Avenue Arts, 1620 Twelfth Avenue, Seattle. ■

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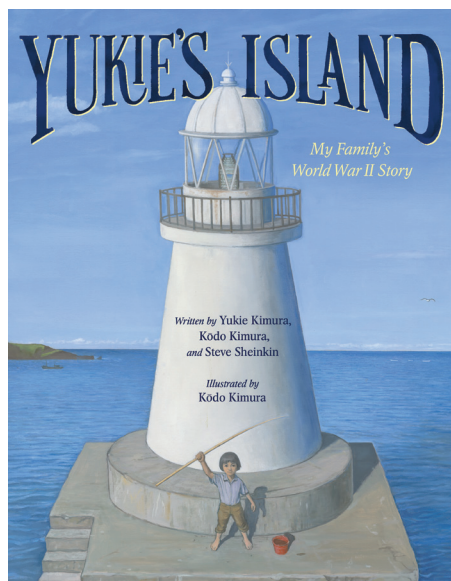
IE ARTS

Yukie's Island: My Family's World War II Story illustrates the resiliency of imagination, human spirit after war

By Clarissa Gines
IE Contributor

In *Yukie's Island: My Family's World War II Story*, a young 8-year-old Yukie Kimura narrates her upbringing during World War II in northern Japan, living the life of a lighthouse keeper's daughter. With her brother Yoshio, they go on adventures and scour the shoreline, where they find seagull eggs and seafood. Their studious older sister, Yasue, on the other hand, prefers reading over exploring. Even though they knew a war was happening, their young imaginations allow them to be anything they want to be, aside from children living through conflict and fear.

However, when the bombing reaches their tiny island with the lighthouse, life as they know it changes drastically and things after the war will never be the same. Despite the trauma and destruction that is brought upon their lives, Yoshio, Yasue, and Yukie are still able to find a path toward healing through imagination and play. Even though Yukie was skeptical about not fearing anything after the war, hope and a feeling of safety arise once her imagination allows her to become an ex-



plorer again, jumping on floating ice floes with her siblings as the sun begins to set.

For co-writer and illustrator Kōdo Kimura, collaborating and illustrating this story with his mother, Yukie, was a fun process, and shared, "I asked many questions when I visited her in Japan, or through video calls. She remembered many details which I had never heard

before, and those were very exciting moments."

Kimura's mother, Yukie, shared her childhood stories as a daughter of a lighthouse guard with him many times, but he never intended to turn those stories into a book. It was through the excitement of author Steven Sheinkin (who Kimura shared and translated the stories with) that the idea of a picture book emerged.

While Kimura's art career spans decades, starting with art school in Tokyo and then moving to the United States in 1992 (first to Seattle, then New York City), this book is the first picture book he has ever illustrated. The illustrations reflect his painting style and philosophy, which capture still scenes and details, rather than highlighting action and movement.

During the process of writing *Yukie's Island: My Family's World War II Story*, Kimura also discovered his aunt Yasue's memoir, which provided a breadth of information that was imperative to the writing of the book. With his aunt being five years older than his mother, she was able to share insightful details about their upbringing in Japan during World War II.

This story offers an accessible way for

readers, both young and old, to understand the impacts of war from the unique perspective of a child living through its realities in Japan. Through *Yukie's Island: My Family's World War II Story*, Kimura hopes that readers think deeply about how we can honor the expansiveness of humanity, as individuals with families, friends, and loved ones, searching for happiness. Kimura expressed: "If teachers can use this book as a tool for kids to bridge the gap in history and feel a kinship with children growing up during a very different time, I would be very grateful."

More information on *Yukie's Island: My Family's World War II Story*, including information to purchase the book, can be found online. ■



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“Renegade Edo and Paris” at the Seattle Asian Art Museum

By Susan Kunimatsu
IE Contributor

The influence of Japanese art of the Edo Period on the visual arts of late 19th century France is well documented by art historians. In *Renegade Edo and Paris*, currently on view at the Seattle Asian Art Museum, curator Xiaojin Wu brings together masterworks from both countries that are rarely shown together. She takes us on a deep dive into the sociological conditions in two emerging world capitals on opposite sides of the globe, inviting us to look beneath the visible similarities in the art.

The Edo Period in Japan was one of peace, prosperity, and social change. In 1603, the Shogun moved the government capital from the imperial city of Kyoto to Edo, present-day Tokyo. Over the next century, Edo grew to a city of one million people, propelled by the influx of wealth and demand for goods and services. Half the population was merchants, artisans, and entertainers. Although economically prosperous, in Japan’s rigid social structure they were low class. Lacking political power and security, these chonin or townspeople adopted a hedonistic lifestyle of transient pleasures: ukiyo, the floating world. In that world, Kabuki actors were celebrities and “pleasure women” were

fashion icons. In contrast to the conservative imperial court, the street style of Edo was modern and bold.

Woodblock prints captured this burgeoning urban culture. Publishers, artists, block carvers and printers collaborated to mass produce prints that were affordable to, and widely collected by the new middle class. These ukiyo-e prints broke with tradition in style and subject matter: urban landscapes, ordinary people, popular entertainers and pleasure women are rendered in dynamic compositions of bright flat colors and bold lines.

The Edo Period and the reign of the shoguns ended with the Meiji Restoration in 1868. Western nations broke Japan’s self-imposed isolation. Japanese art and consumer goods began arriving in Europe and North America, sparking japonisme, a craze for all things Japanese. A seminal event was the Exposition des Maîtres Japonais (Exhibition of the Japanese Masters) in Paris in 1890. Among the thousand-plus works on view were many ukiyo-e prints. French visual artists adopted the Japanese subjects and stylistic conventions in their work.

France’s Third Republic was established in 1870 around the same time as the Meiji Restoration. The end of the monarchy led to a period of stability. Already

an industrial hub, Paris became a center of intellectual, technological, and cultural innovation. These conditions fostered the growth of a prosperous middle class including scientists, engineers, artisans, and entrepreneurs whose tastes veered away from those of the old aristocracy. As in the floating world of Edo, Parisian popular culture celebrated bourgeois pastimes while cabaret singers and dancers became the new celebrities.

Lithography was introduced in Europe in the 19th century as an advertising medium. Unlike earlier printing technologies, the technique allows the artist to draw directly on the printing plate with oil-based media like crayons or paint, producing images as fresh and spontaneous as freehand drawings. Cabaret owners commissioned Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec and other artists to create event posters that portrayed leading entertainers and lively, sometimes suggestive scenes inside the venues. The posters incorporated design elements of ukiyo-e like asymmetric compositions, tightly cropped images, silhouettes, and reflections. Their artistry elevated lithograph prints to a collectible art form.

The exhibition is organized in four sections. Japanese works hang in the same galleries as the French pieces that they influenced. In the introductory gallery, a pair of screens depict panoramas of urban life in Edo. Posters of Paris landmarks include the Divan Japonais, a café and music venue that had imitation-Japanese décor. Henri Rivière’s book of lithographs, “Thirty-Six Views of the Eiffel Tower” (1902) is a tribute to Katsushika Hokusai’s portfolio of woodblock prints, “Thirty-Six Views of Mount Fuji” (1830-32). Selections from both works are on display.

“Entertainment: Shitamachi and Montmartre” takes us into the theaters and cabarets of the two cities. Toulouse-Lautrec’s “Moulin Rouge: La Goulue” (1891) and “The Englishman at the Moulin Rouge” (1892) are scenes inside the storied cabaret. The foreground and background figures in profile reference works like Utagawa Yoshitora’s “Fashionable Spring Moon” (ca. 1847-52), in which silhouettes of a dancer and musicians background a trio of bustling waitresses.

“Celebrity Culture” brings together iconic portraits of famous Kabuki actors and French cabaret performers. Katsukawa Shunshō and Katsukawa Shunei both portray Ichikawa Danjūrō V in two of his famous roles. He can be recognized by his long nose and red costume printed with his family crest. In poster illustrations, Toulouse-Lautrec featured singer Yvette Guilbert’s exaggerated posture and trademark long black gloves. Cabaret singer and owner Aristide Bruant was known for his wide-brimmed black hat and red scarf.

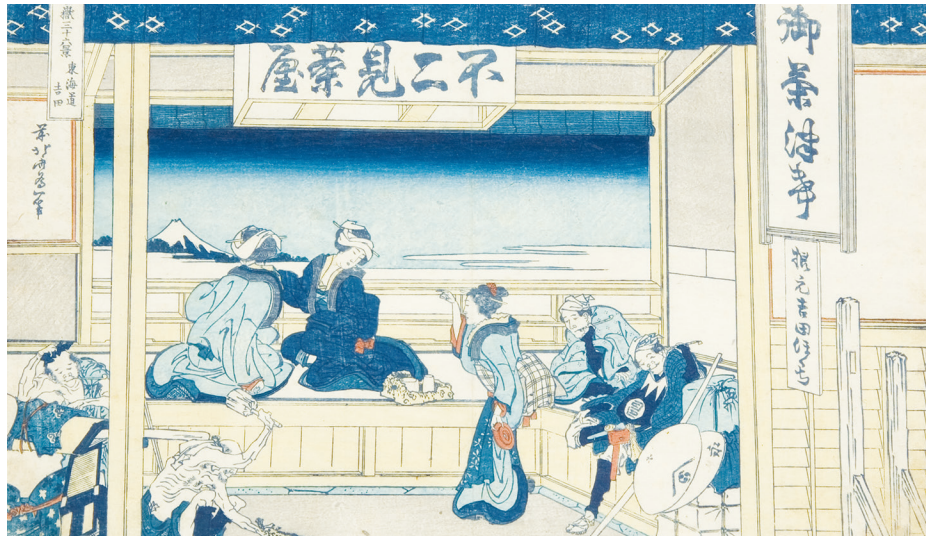
In contrast, women of the “Pleasure Quarters” were viewed quite differently by the two societies. In Edo, geisha, who were skilled musicians, dancers, and cal-



“Delivering a Letter” by Kitagawa Utamaro • Courtesy



“The Actor Ichikawa Danjūrō V” by Katsukawa Shunsho • Courtesy



“Yoshida on the Tokaido” by Katsushika Hokusai • Courtesy



“Woman at the Tub” by Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec • Courtesy

ligraphers, and yūjo or “play women” plied their trade in the gated and sanctioned Yoshiwara district. In prints by Kitagawa Utamaro, these women appear idealized and refined, beautifully groomed and fashionably dressed. French prostitutes were less reputable. In prints from Toulouse-Lautrec’s album “Elles” (She), they look like the everyday world-weary women that they were.

The exhibition catalog includes an essay on the floating world of Edo and commentary on the show’s organizing themes by Xiaojin Wu, former curator of Japanese and Korean Art at the Seattle Art Museum. Mary Weaver Chapin, curator of prints and drawings at the Portland Art Museum contributes an essay on Bohemian Paris and Toulouse-Lautrec. In both the catalog and the exhibition, the art is organized and presented in a way that illuminates the historical parallels underlying the visual connections, providing a fresh context in which to view these works.

Renegade Edo and Paris is at the Seattle Asian Art Museum through December 3. Information at 206.654.3100 or seattleartmuseum.org. ■

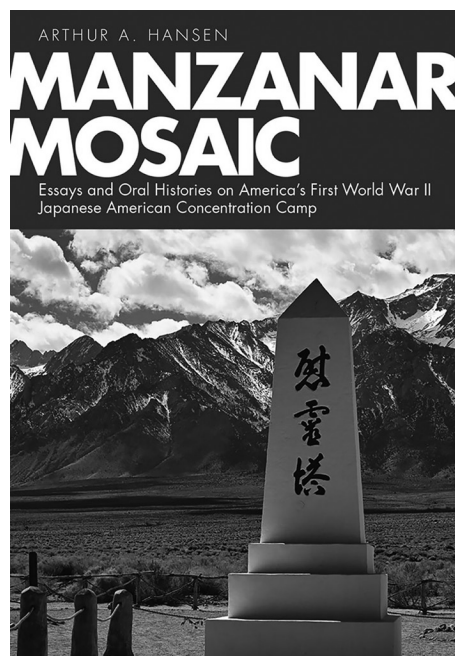
IE ARTS

Manzanar Mosaic: Essays and Oral Histories on America's First World War II Japanese American Concentration Camp is a great historical guide

By Chizu Omori
IE Contributor

The name Art Hansen should be familiar to many Japanese Americans as one of the foremost scholars in the study of the incarceration of Japanese Americans during WWII. But beyond his great contribution to our understanding that period, Hansen has been a staunch supporter and contributor to many community endeavors like Japanese American National Museum, the Manzanar Committee, and a long list of community activities. We will never know how deeply he has contributed, and in what ways, but his unstinting generosity, offers of help, and friendship have affected many of our lives.

Perhaps his major contribution is his deep and wide understanding of our community and its history. Although, as he states in the preface of *Manzanar Mosaic*, he has not “produced a dizzying profusion of exemplary books,” his output has equal value to scholarly studies in that he has based his studies on a vast number of in depth oral interviews collected over many years along with keeping up with the literature and research. And, as he writes, the theme of resistance to oppression is foremost in his en-



quiries and writings. For this, we should be grateful in that he has looked at our history with nuance, depth and complexity, widening our understanding of what took place.

For a long period, the subject of resis-

tance was ignored and downplayed in the literature, but at this point, it has come to the forefront as a very important part of camp history, perhaps a basic component, and also throws a spotlight on major divisions and conflicts within the Japanese American community.

Though the basic evil was perpetrated by President Franklin Roosevelt and the American government, how events played out was often a product of the history of Japanese America and the fact that the old country immigrants were entering a period of conflict with their citizen children. It's a dramatic story, I grant, and, to me, these clashes within the confines of a concentration camp reached tragic heights, splitting families, labeling protest as disloyalty, and destroying the life's work of the immigrant generation.

Given the repressive government policies and the reactions of factions playing out in the camps, the incarceration shook the Japanese American community to its core.

Giving a voice to people who were actually there in Manzanar during the so-called “riot,” which resulted in the death of two young men and the wounding of nine oth-

ers, the book fleshes out the event in a way that no standard history could ever do, and adds another “dimension” to how we can come to understand what really happened in richer and greater detail. It enlarges what we have come to accept as “history” by adding real individuals to the narrative. As such, this account adds a dimension to what we understand about the past with the elements of human voices.

In *Manzanar Mosaic*, Hansen includes two essays, one on the Japanese American prewar “Communist” press and the other on the Manzanar “riot.” The rest of the book consists of interviews with Sue Embrey, Togo Tanaka, Karl Yoneda, Elaine Yoneda, and Harry Ueno. These are important names in Japanese American history, and their stories vibrate with memories and their takes on what happened. Stuck in a no-win situation, they, along with the rest of the incarcerated people, were forced to take stands and live with the consequences.

Hansen continues to inform and deepen our understanding of what our Japanese American community endured. For this, I am deeply grateful.

He remains a great guide. ■

After fighting his school bully, young boy goes to a meditation retreat in author Minh Lê's *Enlighten Me*

By Kalani Kapahua
IE Contributor

No one ever asks to relive their angsty preteen years. When watching Disney movies becomes too childish and Santa Claus coming down a chimney seems outright laughable, those ages shortly before becoming a teenager and entering high school are often an awkward time of growth, transition, and for many, great isolation.

In *Enlighten Me*, Minh Lê's new graphic novel for young readers, Binh, a young Vietnamese American, perfectly demonstrates what a difficult time this can be.

While not central to the plot in any significant way, *Enlighten Me* is clearly set in a time well before smartphones. Readers of a certain age will relive late '80s, early '90s nostalgic charm in this book, which is packed full of wonderfully subtle details in the art by bestselling illustrator Chan Chau. There is the great faux-wood paneled station wagon, shaggy hair, muted colors, and of course, a whole lot of 8-bit video game renderings featured throughout this book.

In its opening pages, readers first meet Binh with a Game Boy in his hands, staring intently as the video game onomatopoeia of “boing boing,” “fwp fwp,” and “whomp whoomp” sounds come to life as

it is revealed the his family is going on a road trip to an unknown destination. We quickly learn through Binh's older sisters that they are going to a meditation retreat.

“How come other kids get to go to basketball camp, horseback riding camp, space camp, camping camp, but we get to go to a silent meditation camp? How'd we get so lucky?” they jokingly ask each other on the long drive.

Throughout the long car ride up to the mountains, Binh is silent, too enamored with his video game to talk to his family. His parents, however, want to know what made Binh snap and fight his bully at school, a driving mystery that recurs throughout the story. While his parents are relieved Binh doesn't face a suspension, Binh doesn't understand why he's in trouble at all: “I just did what I was supposed to do — I took on the villain!”

The family finally arrives at the Three Jewels Mountain Retreat and everyone must go completely silent, not using their voice at all. But worst of all for Binh, he must give up his Game Boy, the only thing in the world that seemingly gives him joy.

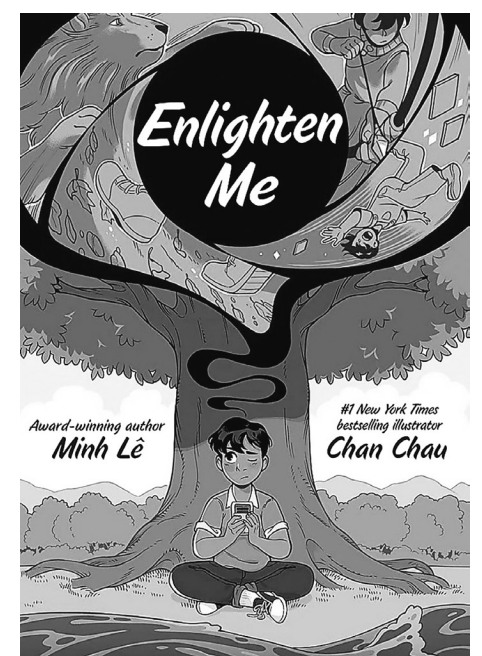
From here, the central story kicks in as the kids get broken into daily classes led by Buddhist monks who teach the story of Siddhartha, the origins of Buddhism, and the Jataka tales of the Buddha's past lives.

Binh begins to visualize these teachings as video games he's playing on his Game Boy. In time, these video game lessons that he dreams up begin to form useful life lessons, as he begins to understand what enlightenment is all about.

In one of the penultimate moments in the book Binh is reminded by his teacher that “instead of trying to lose yourself in the moment, you should think of it as trying to find yourself in the moment,” a refrain that makes Binh smile for the first time in the book.

While the book has frequent flashbacks to Binh's fight with his bully, it is never specifically revealed what actually was said or done to make him finally snap and act out. When talking to his sisters in a flashback to the day of his fight with the bully, Binh angrily thinks to himself, “At school, I'm not American enough. At home, I'm not Vietnamese enough,” leaving us to believe that Binh was bullied for being Asian, a point further confirmed when the white school principal punishes Binh without permitting him to explain his side.

The uncertain details of the past are a strength of this book overall. *Enlighten Me* is after all a great introductory read on Buddhism and meditation, making the specific details of Binh's past simply not as significant. What is past is past, and Binh's



only way to move forward is to simply focus on the present.

Third Place Books will host author Minh Lê and illustrator Chan Chau at their Seward Park store on Tuesday, September 19 at 7 p.m. They will be discussing *Enlighten Me*, joined in conversation by local children's book author Lily LaMotte. This event is free and open to the public. ■

Wading through the tides of time in Jinwoo Chong's debut novel *Flux*

By Joshua Bonofacio
IE Contributor

Flux, a stunning debut novel by Jinwoo Chong, is all about the feeling of being disoriented. It starts with a bit of a misleading marketing premise. At the center of its story is 28-year-old Brandon, who, in his aimlessness after being laid off, takes on a job with Flux, a mysterious organization that promises to the world the secret to infinite renewable energy. Intertwined with his perspective is that of Bo and Blue; the former is a child processing recent tragedy, the latter is a middle-aged man reflecting on his life as he attempts to reconnect with his family while closing out loose ends from his past.

A cursory read of the marketing on the jacket text promises the story of a man whose suspects his company has used their discovery of time travel for unsavory reasons. And while elements of this premise exist, *Flux* truly comes down to this: a profoundly moving story about grief, and a first-person account about surviving in the hyper-capitalistic world of today.

Easily appreciated is the depth Chong has put into anchoring the protagonist Brandon as the heart of the story. As someone who straddles different cultural identities, his listlessness is deeply felt, as is his yearning to make sense of the loss he's experienced in life. When the opportunity to join Flux arrives, he takes it, not fully understanding what he's agreeing to in exchange for the promise of steady employment. His desperation, apathy, yearning, detachment — all come across as an honest depiction of a deeply conflicted worker at the crossroads of the worlds he has found himself in.

Flux is heavily experimental. It jumps between multiple timelines, and a good portion of it is dedicated to Brandon's monologues to Raider, a fictional character from an '80s detective show that Brandon grew heavily attached to as a child. The novel itself jumps across many topics: climate change; the nature of art detached from its creators; racial and sexual identity; and, above all, the ways grief inhabits us and stays for life. Sometimes, *Flux* feels like it's biting off more than it can chew given the expansiveness even just one of these topics can occupy space in the story. However, the overall package is an admirable ode to life's messiness.

Given the elements of time travel that Brandon suspects his employers are up to, one particular passage that plays heavily with the linearity of its scenes makes for the most memorable memory of my time reading this story. All told in first-person perspective, readers will feel how bewildering it is to be Brandon in the center of it all, as temporal stability and an understanding of self lose all meaning.

Other impressionable moments from the novel delve quickly into spoiler territory if further explained, but what I will say is that Chong's writing excels best whenever he manipulates story conventions regarding perspective.

Flux soars when it puts its trust into its protagonist to think as any real human would — unreliable. At times Brandon is forthright, other times he's reserved and keeps information to himself, lest it spills out before he's ready to comprehend the meaning of it. Finishing this story felt like coming out of a dark room, the truth of its disconcerting story laid bare only in retrospect.

As with many novels that reflect on the ennui of modern life, one thing I was ap-

"Finishing this story felt like coming out of a dark room, the truth of its disconcerting story laid bare only in retrospect."

prehensive about upon getting into this story was whether *Flux* was willing to do more with its themes after touching on them at the surface level. As I continued reading, it became clear that Chong knows how to boldly blend the boundaries of genres. His ability to intertwine profound contemplations on life with the weirdness of the story's science fiction elements made for a highly refreshing read.

In the end, *Flux* will likely make for an immensely rewarding read for an audience open to receiving its genre-defying story. For those who prefer stories that don't throw constant curveballs, it will confuse, and maybe disappoint. Have the patience to wade through the chaos, though, and *Flux* will surely enlighten. ■



DUWAMISH RIVER: Continued from page 2 . . .

enough to deter a public who have fished here for over two decades.

"A lot of folks are grateful to learn [about the content on this seafood advisory sign] in a way that they can understand," Ho said. "Folks who have been fishing there for years would say, 'Well, you know, I'm glad I'm hearing it from a friend because I don't pay attention to the sign.'"

Though the signs messaging is written in multiple languages, the text is miniscule in comparison to the overshadowing texts in English. In the end, community members prefer in-person outreach from CHA workers who share a culture and language with them, an exchange students witnessed during the field trip.

By including the young people in this process, they learned effective methods for educating their communities on important municipal terms and regulations in a digestible manner. The concept of environmental justice, for example, was a topic that the students explored with ECOSS during a class by watching a governmental video and then working together to simplify the definition in their own words.

"This term that might feel very big and academic then feels more like something that they can actually explain to their peers," Nguyen said. "They're validated by that too — to see their words being put into this collective definition."

Inspiring the next generation of community leaders

Back at the Agents of Change: Youth for Healthy Seafood celebration, Nguyen introduced the "kind and thoughtful" youth, Joann N., XinTong H., K.T., Adrian B., Abdussamad A., Eyman A., Shareef A., and Aman S., inviting them to present their outreach posters to the community steering committee. Utilizing knowledge gained from previous lessons, each student designed a poster to be displayed on bulletin boards across Seattle and South King County.

After graduation, the hope is that the program's participants might be inspired to implement their newly-practiced skills beyond the 12-week session, becoming community leaders themselves.

"At first, a lot of Community Health Advocates started doing outreach just in their living rooms or other community spaces," said Ho. "There were a lot of cultural and community festivals, like Folklorico, that [they] would table at that [reached] really broad audiences."

"We went to the Folklorico Festival on June 24, which mostly serves the Spanish-speaking community, and one student invited his family to come out," Nguyen added. "We saw his mom, his little sister, and he was able to engage in Spanish when some people came to our table."

This same student presented his poster in both Spanish and English — taking the opportunity to speak in his first language, showcasing his ability to overcome language barriers and enhance meaningful conversations when sharing information about the Duwamish River.

Three students have made videos featuring their family members making a salmon dish, said Nguyen, which demonstrates how the youth are empowering their immigrant parents to reclaim a connection to nature, to enjoy their rights to fish, and to form real connections.

The future of the 'Youth for Healthy Seafood' program

"If the youth want to join or create a Community Health Advocate team for their community, [then] I think that would be a great ultimate goal," said Ho. "But of course, I want our community steering committee to lead and drive that direction."

As autumn approaches and a new school year begins, the community steering committee will evaluate youth survey responses and reflect on the cohort's presentations to determine whether this pilot program is effectively empowering and educating Duwamish River communities about the seafood advisory and the river's status as a toxic site for fishing.

The future of the program remains unknown, which will ultimately be decided by the community steering committee. They, however, are not the only community members who can implement strategies beneficial for students from the K-12 education system.

"I really want to encourage schools to be open to having partnerships or collaborations with nonprofit community organizations, where youth can see the environmental field, for example, as a career pathway," Nguyen said.

"If you give them the experiences and make [opportunities] accessible, these youth will sign up for programs they might not see at school. They're very open to learning new things and are capable of tying it back to their family. They want to engage as long as there are opportunities. It's just, are we showing up for them or not?"

We acknowledge that the places where immigrants and refugees have found refuge, where youth have spent their summer exploring, where community members have gathered to exchange knowledge are on traditional land of the Coast Salish Duwamish People. ■

COO
COMMUNITIES OF OPPORTUNITY

This story was produced in partnership with our media sponsor Communities of Opportunity, a growing movement of partners who believe every community can be a healthy, thriving community.

IE ELECTION

DISTRICT 2: Continued from page 11...

think it's really important that we acknowledge that if our goal is to help folks who are suffering from substance use disorder on the street, then we really need to be listening to the public health professionals and what they're telling us is we need more treatment options.

We need more places for people to go to get services to get all of the harm reduction strategies that can prevent overdose fatalities, and at least give folks the option of being in a place where they have access to treatment, if that's something that they're looking for. We're not going to solve the problem by putting people in jail. If we don't get people some sort of treatment, then we know that they will die. And for me, the priority is making sure that we are getting folks off the street and into a situation where they might actually get the help that they need.

TW: Yes, I support Mayor Harrell's Downtown Activation Plan. We're not even there yet in the CID. Public safety is the biggest barrier to activating the neighborhood. I went to his community input meeting regarding the DAP. The biggest concern was, you know, how can we activate and invite people if they don't feel safe? If our small businesses are still facing a lot of barriers to getting customers here. So it's a tough one. I think what we need to do is really focus on that public safety aspect first before we can activate. That will involve working with our community partners and working with SPD.

That's going to involve hiring more ambassadors, case managers, and not just going out there and finding people housing and trying to give them treatment, but finding those long-term case managers that will help all the people and partner people through their journey to make sure that there aren't any relapses.

The Louisa Hotel works with a group called Housing Connector that houses the formerly unhoused and pairs people up with caseworkers. We found that in that case, when caseworkers are actively partnering people, everything goes well. But if something gets missed or there's a lot of turnover, sometimes people with caseworkers lose theirs. We found in those instances, people sometimes have issues or come across difficulty. So how do we find those long term caseworkers, and make sure they're being paid a living wage, maybe even the same wage as a police officer, and making sure that we have alternative policing?

This is not an issue that can get solved overnight. But I think over time, we can make a small dent, but we have to have a plan. I think it's all the above, and we have to make sure that people feel safe before we can activate because we're not there yet. And people are stuck. A lot of businesses have armed security now and, you know, I don't think that's the way to go. I think the City and the community has to work together to do something to come up with a plan to be able to make a dent in all of these issues.

IE: What are your thoughts on the City's current response to homelessness in the CID? If elected, what plan would

you support as a solution to bring people inside during your next term?

TM: Well, what we know is that there are something like 6,000 shelter beds in King County, and something like 48,000 homeless people. So, you know, even if everybody said "Yes," we would still have 42,000 people with no place to go on the street. While we are waiting for permanent supportive housing to be built, for low-income apartments to be built, we have to have places for folks to go that are safe, where they can still get access to treatment and services. I'm starting to feel like a broken record.

We need more tiny house villages, we need more enhanced shelters, we need more RV safe lots. I think the City has a role to play in finding this space for these, partnering with community organizations who would be willing to house these. But that's the kind of security, it's the kind of community that is needed in order for people to get off the streets. We know how hard it is to get people into shelter. Not just because

"It all needs to be done in language, again. But they are starting to look at kind of a small business navigator process to help folks work through all those different options that are being looked at really as as a strategy for investing in the future of the Seattle small business ecosystem."

we don't have enough of it, but because once they get there, they're worried about being assaulted or having their things stolen or getting lice. And so we have to have places for people to go to be safe, to get access to services, access to toilets and showers and kitchens, trash pickup. It is not a permanent solution. I don't think anybody claims that it is, but it is a very much needed short term solution. And I think we should be doing more of that, while we wait for more permanent housing to be built.

TW: We've been talking to the Salvation Army SoDo shelter to allow us to have like about ten beds for community referrals. Having to work through the City with different organizations to get a referral is not efficient. If we see somebody who's asking for housing at like, 8 p.m. on a Friday, we can't get a case worker or or social worker out there until Monday when they're working. So is there a way where community can make referrals to local shelters for people who need emergency housing?

We met this young lady a couple of months ago, who, you know — the Community Resource Guide is great, but a lot of numbers there, there is basically nothing after the hours of 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. There was a young lady who wanted emergency housing

at 8 p.m. We called around, called YWCA. There was nothing open, nothing available. And we basically had to tell her, can you go walk to the YWCA and wait there, or we can take you to the airport. The airport's safe, there's bathrooms there. She decided that she wanted to walk over to the YMCA, wait outside until open the next morning.

IE: Chinatown International District businesses experienced severe struggles during the pandemic, and economic recovery still isn't back to pre-pandemic levels. What should the City do to help businesses recover and stay afloat?

TM: During the pandemic, we passed rent control for small businesses and had an eviction moratorium for folks. I think those are the kinds of things we need to look at again. Part of what I'm working on with the Office of Economic Development is wealth building strategies, particularly for communities of color. And so I do think that commercial rent stabilization is going to be an important element of that so that our small businesses have the same kind of tenant protections that we want residential tenants to have. I'm really interested in scaling up something that we have relatively new — the Business Community Ownership Fund — which can help small businesses purchase commercial property so that they aren't tenants anymore, but they're actually owners. That's an important piece of stopping the displacement that's happening. Those kinds of investments in our small business are going to be important. We also need to be investing in our talent, in our workforce. I'm particularly interested in supporting how we get folks into green infrastructure jobs.

There's a lot of work to do, to support small businesses, particularly minority, women-owned businesses, around access to capital, working on our contracting opportunities for them with large employers in the city. And really looking at how we improve neighborhood facilities, where small businesses operate. A lot of what we hear right now is that our small businesses, particularly in the CID, need more trash pickup, they need other services, they need a lot of technical support in understanding their lease agreements or, you know, what the tax structure looks like, or how they make the kind of investments in their space that they're looking for. Those are all things that the Office of Economic Development is starting to work on.

It all needs to be done in language, again. But they are starting to look at kind of a small business navigator process to help folks work through all those different options that are being looked at really as as a strategy for investing in the future of the Seattle small business ecosystem.

TW: Oh, I think we should definitely do more to help businesses recover and stay afloat. A lot of the grants that the community has received were not applicable to a lot of our small businesses because many of them had to show, I guess, a year of loss of some sort. Or there were other barriers, and so many businesses were not able to qualify for grants.

I would love to see is to have like a — like what we have in Othello, what we have in the University District — a customer ser-

vice desk there, where people go in and ask questions. Love to see something like that in many of our neighborhoods, including the CID. A place where there is somebody in your language who can explain these programs to our small businesses and walk them through the process. Our community groups like SCIDpda and InterIm, do that, but it'd be great to have a dedicated person to really take the time and care to be available to businesses, and family associations to help.

More grants, more access to city resources, more access to capital, would be great, because it's very hard for us to get a loan. For many small businesses, trying to open their brick and mortar, trying to get a permit has been very cumbersome. How can the process be expedited so businesses are not waiting while costs go up to be open? And then also, in addition to access to capital and to city resources, insurance is a huge issue. We have to go through a third party provider and costs are very high.

Everything is just marketing. I know this is not the City but I think they play a huge role in this. We saw MLB week, the Taylor Swift concert, Ed Sheeran, Mariners games, like when the city announces that, you know, please use other modes of transportation because of these high impact events. What is happening is that people just don't show up, they just avoid the area completely and that really hurts our businesses. Helping the community do marketing in conjunction with these events like MLB week, I mean, it would have been nice to have a booth at the All Star Weekend to really promote Chinatown businesses and restaurants.

IE: The CID is home to a large concentration of unreinforced masonry buildings and the City Council passed Resolution 32033 in 2021, which established the framework for a mandatory retrofit ordinance that could occur in summer 2025 at the earliest. If City Council proceeds with this legislation during your term, what role would you play in ensuring that it meets the needs of the CID community at-large?

TM: Well, that's a great question. I've had a lot of conversations with SCIDpda in particular about this. So you know, there is the safety issue, the emergency disaster preparedness issue of making sure that these buildings are protected, you know, retrofitted. And there's the issue of costs. So, how we support property owners in being able to make these retrofits, which can be very expensive, given that they have limited income, with their affordable rents that they are charging. I think there is a place for the City, really, for the feds to come in with federal loan assistance. I know this is something we've talked about before, having FEMA maybe provide some loan assistance, so that these property owners can make the changes that are needed. I know there was conversation about either phasing in the requirements so that not everybody has to do it at the same time, or phasing in financial support, so that we start with the buildings that are most at risk, and get those

DISTRICT 2: Continued on page 22...

Holding Pattern: How far does the apple fall from the tree?

By Stella Liu
IE Contributor

The ages-old questions of family and love become inextricably tangled with each other in the new novel *Holding Pattern*, the story of a mother and daughter navigating changes in their lives and the open wounds they've let fester for way too long. It's the newest book from author Jenny Xie, who hails from Shanghai and California just like main character Kathleen Cheng and is no stranger to writing fiction and other works. Through *Holding Pattern*, Xie probes the very essence of being both a woman and a daughter, and simultaneously, just a girl in a world dominated by the nuclear family ideal.

Everything Kathleen Cheng thought she knew — her master's research in psychol-

ogy, her 3-year-long relationship, and the push-and-pull dynamic she has with her

"The phrase 'holding pattern' takes on varying definitions in the different contexts of each character's life. Traditionally, 'holding pattern' refers to a stagnant state of progress."

single mother — is put under the microscope when she returns to her hometown of Oakland after taking a break from

school. Now, she's planning a wedding for her mother's marriage to the CEO of a Silicon Valley start-up when just a month ago she thought she would be planning one for herself.

The phrase "holding pattern" takes on varying definitions in the different contexts of each character's life. Traditionally, "holding pattern" refers to a stagnant state of progress, typically in the economy or for aircraft landings.

To Kathleen, her holding pattern couldn't be any more apparent. The way her completely transformed mother seems to be sprinting forward with her newfound romance and sporty lifestyle can't help but make Kathleen feel like she's being left in the dust of her own past. Not one for physical affection and especially not one for

holding others, Kathleen surprises even herself when she tries her hand as a cuddle therapist, a new venture suggested by her friend as an application of her studies and as a fresh start. She's thrust into an uncomfortable and unpredictable vulnerability that she grew up avoiding, and for the first time, she's pushing the thin boundaries of the ever-so sacred practice of intimacy and the weight it can carry.

Between the lines of Xie's well-crafted prose, questions about the patterns of human nature drive the story forward and instill a chilling relatability in the retelling of steps that we've all stumbled over. How much of a person is just your idea of them?

HOLDING PATTERN: Continued on page 23. . .

Activist Michi Weglyn featured in new YA biography by Ken Mochizuki

By Yuuna Tajiri
IE Contributor

Like many Japanese Americans during WWII, members of my family were held in U.S. concentration camps. Throughout my own life, I've read books, watched films, and attended all sorts of events about these camps. Before now, however, I'd never heard of Michi Weglyn.

Michi was incarcerated at Turlock and Gila River, and went on to get married, become a costume designer, and write a book, *Years of Infamy*, that exposed a deep lie perpetrated by a racist government. But the book I'm writing about is not that book. Instead, Ken Mochizuki's *Michi Challenges History* is the story of her life, and of the truths she first discovered.

Prior to this, I've read other kids' books on this history. *We Hereby Refuse* featured stories of resistance, as did Fred Korematsu in *Speaks Out* — my dad quoted me for an IE article about a reading we saw with Stan Yogi, one of the authors. *Those Who Helped Us* was also written by Mochizuki, and illustrated by Kiku Hughes, who wrote and illustrated *Displacement*.

Those books, though different from each other, tell more personal stories, focusing on individual accounts of camp. *Michi Challenges History* taught me about the facts that the government covered up, focusing more on politics and what happened afterwards. Neither is better or worse, but the existence of both types of book teaches a more complete history.

Michi Challenges History follows her experiences through camp and the writing of her book, but uses her life to translate the facts she uncovered into a story. This makes it a good all-ages book — it's easier to remember and understand a memorable story than lists of facts.

Reading about her research and the facts she uncovered was pretty neat. From earlier books, I knew the camps were created because of political pressure and racism,

not actual proof, but I hadn't known about the Munson report, carefully conducted for the government, which proved that Japanese Americans were loyal, only for its evidence to be disregarded and hidden to appease the racist public.

I also didn't know about the renunciants at Tule Lake, who renounced their U.S. citizenship to go to Japan, pressured by camp officials and groups like the Hoshi Dan, nor about Wayne Collins, the lawyer who took on their cases. He stopped their deportations and spent fourteen years restoring their citizenship, helping thousands. *Years of Infamy* is dedicated to him.

I learned, too, about the treatment of the draft resisters — young incarcerated who refused to be drafted into the Army because they did not have their rights as citizens. They were arrested and convicted, and most served up to three years in prison. After being pardoned in 1947, many were ostracized by their own communities.

I also learned about Seabrook Farms. When the government began resettling incarcerated, Seabrook Farms took advantage of Japanese Americans looking for jobs, including Michi's family. They were forced to live in barrack-like housing with many similarities to the camps: poor living conditions, extreme temperatures, a high fence to prevent escape, schools and jobs only inside the grounds, work with long shifts and low pay. Worse than the camps, people had to buy and cook their own food, paying more than they would outside.

Of course, the book is about Michi, and there's a lot of cool stuff about her. Before the war, Michi's parents told her to not call attention to herself; she had to "know her place," and not offend her white peers. However, in the camps everyone was in the same situation. Most were sharecroppers, fishermen, or ran small businesses, and all had been forcibly removed from their homes. She started to excel because she could finally stand out.

Later, after redress was secured, Michi

continued fighting for the "forgotten ones," like railroad and mine workers unfairly fired for being Japanese American, and Chol Soo Lee, wrongfully convicted of murder. She also wrote to the New York Times to suggest that restaurants give excess food to families that could not afford it.

Michi's husband Walter has an intriguing story, too. Walter was a Jewish child in prewar Germany. After the anti-Jewish violence of Kristallnacht, Walter escaped with the Kindertransport, a child-rescue effort, and was taken in by a wealthy Jewish family in Holland. When the Nazis invaded, they were sent to a concentration camp, but Walter escaped again. He spent the next three years in hiding, helped by various people and sleeping anywhere from a closet to a hole under a goat stable.

After Allied forces drove Nazi forces from the Netherlands, Walter could finally come out of hiding. In 1945, he was reunited with his parents, who had been sent to a ghetto, Theresienstadt. He and his parents were among few survivors — his parents were among the 19,000 Theresienstadt survivors out of 144,000, and Walter was one of two out of 2,000 in his Kindertransport group.

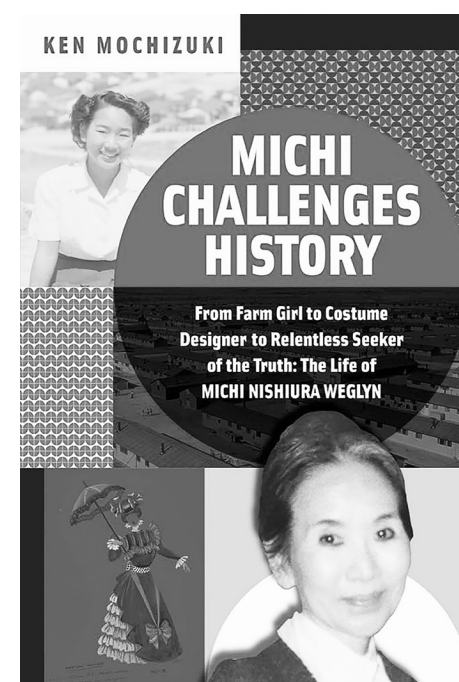
I found this interesting because although, unlike the Nazi death camps, the U.S. concentration camps weren't intended for killing, both inflicted deep psychological damage. Walter encouraged Michi to keep going in her research because he understood what happened, and he wanted the people who had suffered to have justice.

Reading this story today makes me think of the protests at the Northwest Detention Center, since it's essentially a modern version of a camp. My dad and I went to a "solidarity day" there, organized by La Resistencia on Father's Day. Many of the people imprisoned at NWDC are fathers, and one of the Japanese American so-called "troublemakers" was a father of fifteen, separated from his family.

In the camps, "troublemakers" were organizers of strikes and protests, or anyone seen as disloyal, favoring the enemy, or just maybe having done something wrong. They were separated and held in more heavily guarded prisons. Like them, the people at NWDC are separated from their families and do not deserve to be imprisoned. They have done nothing wrong, they live in inhumane conditions, the food they receive is often inedible, and many people on the outside don't know or care that they're inside.

There are a lot of connections and parallels between both groups. The purpose of Michi's book was to let the public know what had happened, and that's one thing we can do for people in NWDC and similar detention centers.

Yuuna Tajiri is entering the seventh grade. He is a fifth-generation Japanese American, second-generation Korean American, and a fourth-generation contributor to the ethnic press. ■



IE ELECTION

DISTRICT 2: Continued from page 20 . . .

taken care of first, and then sort of work our way out of the circle until most of the buildings that are that are at risk are taken care of.

So it is admittedly a big problem in terms of the cost that's associated with it. And if the Big One comes there will be a lot of people in danger. That really has to be the focus, making sure that we are supporting the property owners and doing the right thing because we certainly don't want to be dealing with a catastrophe on the other side and know that we could have prevented significant death.

TW: I think the biggest concern about this ordinance is that our family associations, who own these buildings, will not be able to afford to upgrade their buildings. This is why these buildings remain empty right now. Many, many of our elders don't want to take on that multimillion dollar loan at such an old age because they're not entirely sure how they would be able to pay for it.

My experience from developing the Louisa Hotel has taught me a lot of things, like how much work and how hard it is to really upgrade these buildings. We saw with the Eng Suey building, when it caught on fire, the Eng family association ended up selling it for \$8 million to an international developer. That's not what we want to see, we want to make sure that our families are able to retain their buildings, there's so much legacy history there. The priority is to make sure that there isn't a mass sell out. How do we work together with these families, family associations, to be able to come up with access to capital, if necessary to upgrade?

The whole planning process of these upgrades is immense. How does the city work together in terms of putting together a task force? How do we find access to capital, if there is a grant system, a way to help families and foundations plan this retrofit in a way that is not overwhelming? Access to capital is the biggest barrier, as well as the whole idea of, you know, the planning and the process of complying to City ordinances and resolutions, especially if these families

are not English speakers and are mostly immigrants or refugees. How do they navigate this very complex city process? It's going to take a very multi-step process and something I have been through personally, and I think I have the leadership and the knowledge to be able to help the CID figure this out.

IE: The Sound Transit Board endorsed a plan to place new light rail stations to the north and south of the CID, while keeping 4th Avenue on the table for further study. Could you talk about which option you support and why?

TM: What I will say is that there are a lot of small businesses that are at risk with the 4th Avenue option. I think it's important that we make public transit the easiest transportation choice. But we also have to make sure that we're not displacing residents and local businesses in the CID. Because of the history of this particular neighborhood, the history of the impact of all of these transportation projects on this particular neighborhood, that is a conversation that really needs to be handled carefully. I don't think

that it is a reason across the board to stop a project. But in this particular neighborhood, it's huge, and the CID is already recovering from decades of government-imposed transportation projects. So I also think that we really need to call on Sound Transit, on City and County folks, to identify the specific mitigation measures, and to make sure that they're delivering regardless of what ends up happening, because I know this is still in the EIS [Environmental Impact Statement] process. But regardless of which one ends up getting selected, there have to be very specific commitments made to community benefit, and to those mitigation measures.

One more thing I'll say is that we've been partnering with folks in the CID to activate Union Station, improve the Jackson Hub. Really improving the pedestrian experience along the whole transit corridor is also important. And, you know, between SDOT and Sound Transit, there's a lot more work to do there.

DISTRICT 2: Continued on page 23 . . .

LOCAL SIGHTINGS: Continued from page 9 . . .

(2023), Director Joel Salaysay asks us to consider what happens when that chain is interrupted. Vivian, a young Chinese-Canadian mother, grapples with reconnecting to her heritage as she tries to restore her maternal grandmother's rusty wok. Her grandmother explains to her that since moving to North America, the wok has sat unused because it's incompatible with Canadian stovetops.

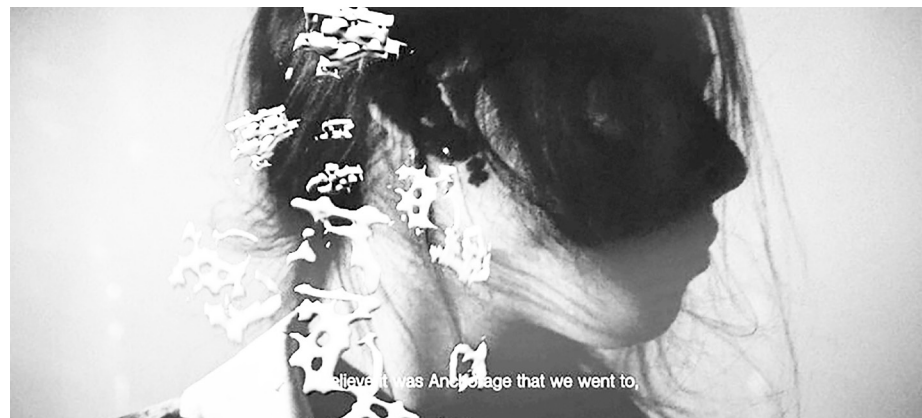
In this short, Vivian reflects on her integration into Canadian society—in some ways seamless, in other ways fraught. Now she struggles to reconnect to her heritage during a family stay at her grandmother's house—the sights and smells of which take her back to her childhood. One day over burgers, she anxiously looks at her bi-racial daughter and thinks back to all the times she's been asked by strangers: Where are you really from? curious if her daughter will share a fate of being seen as a foreigner in her country.

Ultimately, Vivian is looking for a fresh start, a reset to her core foundations. Her hopes imbued in this project to get the wok restored for a big family meal. Most of the film is her narrating her journey atop interacting with her family members—everyone's together for the function. We see Vivian's frustration but also her witty humor amidst the situation.

With the film having a runtime of 10 minutes and entirely taking place at grandma's house, we don't actually get to see the events that shaped Vivian's life, leaving it to her narration to set the context and history.

Wok Hei joins the many works that focus on the themes of reconnecting and assimilation, largely from the lens of the personal story and anecdote. Viewers with their own experiences

struggling with belonging will find the



A still from *Xin Ni* (2023) by Jasmine Liaw • Courtesy



A still from *Xin Ni* (2023) by Jasmine Liaw • Courtesy

story's sentimental beats familiar but not groundbreaking (nor does it feel like it's trying to be). However, it was neat to see a wok being restored in an electrolysis bath.

The focus on food being the main way Vivian reconnects to her family, while in-keeping with the centrality of the wok, I feel limits or forecloses on raising other aspects of reconnecting that people in the diaspora struggle with. Food and cooking are indeed integral parts of staying connected to our cultures, but they're not the only ones. I wish *Wok Hei* had made space to explore some additional threads, but overall it stays focused on Vivian and her goal of putting on an amazing family dinner. It's a straightforward feel-good story that many who are seeking their

own reconnection and reset can strongly relate to, and suggests that it's never too late for us to make new legacies and new memories atop the old.

Xin Ni (2023)

Xin Ni (2023) is a visual poem by artist Jasmine Liaw. It blends personal narration, digital animation, and dance performance to interrogate Liaw's questions about her ethnic and cultural identity, and reflects her desire to understand herself and connect to her Hakka ancestry.

Xin Ni (芯妮), Liaw's Chinese name, translates to 'understanding you'. Its meaning changes between the various Chinese dialects, but at the core is a

theme of love, trust, connection, and gentle tenderness. Liaw opens by exploring the origin of her given name and launches into more fundamental questions about her origins as a Hakka person living in the west.

Throughout the piece, we hear a conversation between Liaw and her father. Together they chronicle the family's migration to Vancouver, BC from Brunei following Malaysia's independence from British colonial rule. After independence, thousands of diasporic Hakka Chinese were denied citizenship in Malaysia and Brunei—we learn that Liaw's family were among those who left to find citizenship elsewhere. This critical framing opens up questions about what happens to diasporic peoples when they find themselves migrating yet again. How would we as diasporic people respond to challenges and difficulties faced in our adopted homes?

Liaw guides us through her process of uncovering and understanding her history to contextualize her present with a tender sincerity. Her dances are echoed by digitized family artifacts that swirl atop the frame: identification papers, a family photo, a durian. All is swept up in the movement of people and things across decades and oceans. The use of 3D scanned objects intermixed with live footage constructs a metaphor that speaks to Liaw's sense of alienation.

Xin Ni has a confessional-like quality. Liaw confides in us all of her anxieties about her simultaneous connection and disconnection to her culture and herself. But there with her, helping guide her through her reflections are her family members. The digital visuals moving across the screen provide a haunting but also soothing ambience, the echoes of her family history are right there with us all the time. Aren't ours too?

She Marches in Chinatown, Wok Hei, and Xin Ni will play at Local Sightings at the NW Film Forum on Sept. 15 - 24, 2023. ■

DISTRICT 2: Continued from page 22. . .

TW: I have to remain neutral on the location, with how divided the community is with this. I think the most important thing is making sure community is being heard. Not just the CID community, but all communities along Line 1. This affects everybody Beacon Hill, Othello Station, Rainier Beach, because this is a very complex issue. And it's going to affect everybody here in South Seattle.

If it was placed North/South, this will no longer be a one seat ride to downtown or to the airport to the CID, there'll be multiple of transfers involved. And also, especially for our seniors, this impacts them. We have a large senior population in the CID, and Sound Transit has not addressed how they will make all stations accessible, North/South especially. There's pros and cons to both.

IE: With either plan, concerns and unanswered questions remain for the community. What are your concerns and questions for Sound Transit?

TM: I do think that there is more to understand about both options. More to understand in terms of the costs, certainly in terms of how the ridership will be affected, and just the feasibility of the north and south options is still not completely known. So I think once the next phase of the EIS is made available, and we have a little bit better understanding of what design really looks like, and how much it'll cost, my guess is there will be another conversation.

TW: So it's interesting. One side is saying they prefer North/South because it would not gentrify or displace the community, they just avoid the community entirely. The other side is saying 4th because if you build North/South, it will, I guess, stop a whole community from access to transit. So displacement and gentrification are, I feel like, the two main topics here that we have to deal with. And there's two different views on both sides.

But some questions that I would like answered are, if it's built North/South, how do they plan to make it accessible for the seniors and people trying to get to our stadiums? How would people wayfind? What would that look like? And I want to ask about costs. What is the cost for North/South versus the cost for 4th? What will the build out process look like for the community? Will that affect the routing of a construction traffic, and also the rerouting of regular traffic? How would that affect businesses? How would that affect our families? I also would like to know, with the siting of North/South, what's going to happen to the campus in downtown with the courthouse and the jail. What's going to happen to the shelter, where south of the CID station was planned? How would that affect the Inscape building? Are they tunneling underground? How deep will that affect the foundations of our buildings? Those are just a few questions.

IE: If elected, how would you use your influence to mitigate or address community concerns around the negative impacts of a new station or stations?

TM: That's why I think early community engagement is going to be important and reducing barriers to participation is going to be important. I am not sure that Sound Transit has done a great job at that. My office meets quarterly with Sound Transit to understand the gamut of things that are affecting the district, things that are happening in the Rainier Valley, and what's happening with the next phase of the system. My role in this situation is really to be serving as kind of a liaison between the community and Sound Transit, and to also be maybe helping convene the community conversations, because the Sound Transit Board? I don't know how many of them actually ride the light rail. It's important to make sure that folks who are making these decisions are hearing directly from people who are impacted by it.

TW: I think, if elected, it's about collaboration and building bridges, bringing community together and addressing the root concerns. Not everyone's going to be happy. I think, you know, these root causes and concerns need to be addressed, espe-

"This is a community that has repeatedly had big projects landed on them without a whole lot of input, without a lot of ability to have a say in what the project looks like. So, I do think that the County could have done a much better job at having deeper conversations with the community."

cially for seniors, and our small businesses, to have conversations about gentrification, displacement. Everyone must understand what's at stake for both sides and everyone's viewpoints. Then I think we can come together. Right now, it seems like there are a lot of lot of opinions, a lot of differences, pros and cons to both. But I have a feeling that, you know, the more we learn about North /South, and the studies being completed, we'll have more answers. I'm hoping that with those answers it will be very clear what choice would work best for the community.

IE: The CID is often making headlines for controversy and issues that divide stakeholders right down the middle. As a City Council member, what is or would be your approach to tough decision making when there's no clear consensus from the community?

TM: Part of my job as a council member is to make hard decisions. And so, I think part of the challenge as a city, it's not just the CID, it's many neighborhoods where residents don't agree on what should happen. What you have to be really careful of is only letting the loudest voices guide the things that are happening. So you know, that's where you work with departments.

Our city departments have really smart people who have been doing this work for a long time and understand the impact of the work that we're doing. You have a lot of conversations with folks, and try to understand what concerns them. If there are things that can be mitigated, support the changes that you can and really try to have the best interest of the entire city at heart.

As somebody who's trained as a neighborhood planner, I go into a lot of these conversations with an understanding of how a system will work and how it intersects, whether it's transportation, housing, economic development, or land use. But I also know that the history of planning. The history of many of the systems of our city is to center the loudest voices and to not always to center equity in our decision making. For me, that's always been the center. How do we make sure that we're addressing the history, the legacy of policymaking that has marginalized communities of color, and that has really created systems where we're just exacerbating inequity? It's not cut and dry. There's so much that needs to be considered.

You have to listen to everybody. You have to get perspective from everybody to really understand how people think they will be impacted. And also understand that if folks haven't been given the opportunity to really understand, for example, these very dense planning documents that are only in English, then you have to work with the community to make sure that there is an opportunity to absorb the information before they form an opinion. That's why I think it is so important to ensure as early as possible that materials are translated, that there are liaisons from these departments or agencies that can really help people understand. Sometimes we have to agree to disagree. And I guess what I would say is, I will acknowledge, I don't always get it right. But I'm always trying to do the next right thing.

TW: You have to listen to both sides. You've got to build bridges, collaborate, bring everyone to the table, and listen to the concerns. We really do have to listen to community and make sure we do the groundwork, getting out there, and just seeing really what's happening, and understanding issue that's going to make a difference. I don't think it's fair to allow a decision being made without community.

Without answering the questions a community has. We really have to bring it down to the neighborhood level, and really get out there and talk to people and not just claim that that's been done. I think we just have to show up and do the hard work it takes to do that, making sure everyone's heard. Because unless you're on the Sound Transit Board, I don't know how much decision you can have regarding the siting of the station.

If I was on the Sound Transit Board, I would make sure we're looking at both sides of the issue. We're talking about both sides, and we're bringing both and then picking our priorities. If it's cost, if it's accessibility, identifying those priorities, and then getting feedback to make sure that everyone's questions are answered before we can move forward with a decision. ■

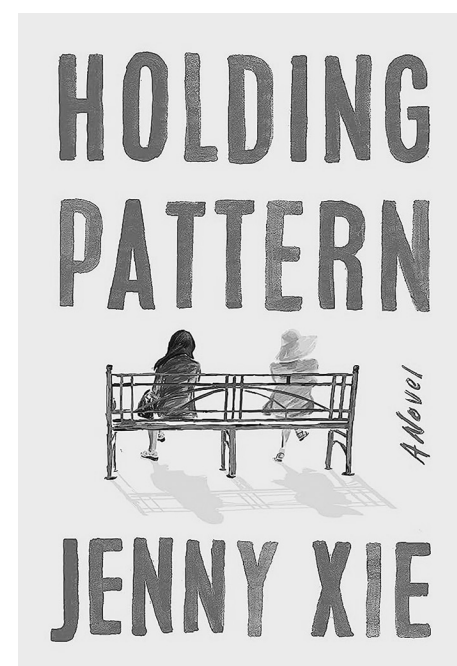
HOLDING PATTERN: Continued from page 21. . .

In an attempt to reconcile with her mother's perspectives, Kathleen realizes that "the more you love someone, the more you treasure the distance between them and you" (112). Faced with the ugly truth of generational trauma and a mother's regrets, she starts to question if "knowing someone" is recognizing the distance neither person will ever be able to cross. Kathleen needs to rediscover everything she's been holding onto — other people, her past, and the scraps of memories long forgotten — and if it's time for her to let go.

Xie's writing has the ability to resonate with you even in the shortest dialogues, in which she pinpoints and embodies the all-too-familiar struggles of immigrant upbringings. While Kathleen is getting increasingly disillusioned with her friends' fast-paced dreams, Xie maintains the tension in her writing, managing a careful balance between flashbacks to past events and the present day. Learning about who Kathleen was through the years is almost like growing up alongside her, and slowly, truths that were once hidden because she was "too young" become unraveled and finally explained. It's easy to see yourself in her shoes, given that Xie masterfully weaves the grievances of an immigrant's daughter with her empathy for human conditions and her tenderness for stories that were once too taboo to be shared out loud.

This story comes from Jenny Xie's own heart, and her privy to the Asian American experience is exemplified through her nuanced crafting of intricate characters and niche pop culture references that make the read both emotionally engaging and fun to follow.

Holding Pattern is a real page-turner, and I'd highly recommend it to anyone who is looking for a refreshing but intellectually stimulating book to pick up. Xie does a great job of capturing the intersectionality of different generations and their complex understandings of family, constantly questioning what it is that keeps a mother and daughter together, and a mother and father apart. ■



IE ARTS

Q&A: Poet Justine Chan weaves together folktales, eco-grief

By Savita Krishnamoorthy
IE Contributor

Justine Chan's newly released poetry book, *Should You Lose All Reason(s)* braids Indigenous folk tales, music, family, the shifting nuances of home(s), and an urgent concern for our planet. I met Justine, fittingly, in a park in Bellevue on a gorgeous spring day.

Savita Krishnamoorthy: I'm really interested in how book covers, and book titles develop so, let's start our conversation there. Why did you choose this book cover?

Justine Chan: The image comes from my evening program at Zion where we had to pick an image for a poster. After our presentation, we'd have to take our poster and put it in the next evening's programs. I kept looking at images of coyotes online and I just really loved this postcard that was circulated in the 1940s, and we ordered this particular postcard from eBay and had it sent to the designer. It had the original writing on the back.

[Regarding] the title, I was thinking a lot about the epigraph by Joan Didion, about this network of stories that help the people in the story survive, that if they do not keep moving at night in the desert, they will lose all reason. So much of the book is about madness, the reason without the 's', and so much is about reasons for why some things have happened, are happening, or will happen, or not. I felt that the title is a kind of hinge where you have to ask: What is the rest of it? I find that kind of ambiguity really interesting.

SK: The book is a narrative in triptych where you are unpacking multiple themes as an observer and an interlocutor on the zeitgeist of our time. Can you please elaborate on this?

JC: I feel like this is a book that I always wanted to write about family, grief, and dealing with disownment in my family, and that I've spent a lot of my 20s on the move, feeling like I'm trying to find my place. There are a lot of threads to the book. To not lose all my friends, to not lose the moments that I'm in. I believe the book captures a very millennial story. We thought we could follow our passion and there would be a spot for us. For me, it's been a lot of trying to follow my passions, but there's often no money in it — just scrambling, trying to survive. And then, at Zion National Park, I learned about the historical and ongoing extermination of so many coyotes and I saw that genocide mirroring the genocide of Indigenous people. Recognizing the history of many national parks as violently stolen Indigenous land, I needed to tie it all together.

SK: I want to continue with that and frame an intervention of the trauma of this loss of home — in the wild, in the desert, animal and indigenous peoples, and in the urban home, by comparing two verses:

On page 8: "Because, somewhere, nestled in the mountains, the only inland glaciers are melting and all you can do is look at the black-and-white pictures and ask



where has it all gone," which speaks to the ecological genocide.

On page 41: "In this city, white wealthy hipsters are moving into the Mexican and Puerto Rican neighborhoods and calling it theirs. This is (what) our generation (wants), they must think."

Can you unpack this, from your experience as a park ranger/observer and as someone who's lived in multiple cities seeing/seen the effects of gentrification and the shifting mappings of cities?

JC: I love that you connected them and thought of them together. It is true that each place has its own sense of loss, of stories, and it is very much human-caused. In the cities, it has so much to do with capitalism and inequality, and I see it a lot here in Seattle. But in Chicago, I always think about a neighborhood that has always meant a lot to me called Wicker Park. In college, I was an intern in a theater there, and spent so much time there, and every other time I'm back in the city, I always go exploring there. [It used to be] a very quiet neighborhood and now it's evolved to a very white, hipster space.

It's a lot to see the demographic of the people changing and feel the loss. I also love and think about Pilsen, another neighborhood that is threatened constantly by gentrification. As a ranger, I am constantly thinking about climate change. On Mount Rainier, I was so close to the glaciers all the time, really seeing how they melted even in the time I was there. In this eco-grief, I was inspired to learn more and tried to present my evening program on glaciers and how Indigenous stories have been erased, tying those stories together.

SK: Going deeper into your observations in the second chapter, "In the City I Call." I experienced this section, as an immigrant, to be a metaphor for belonging, roots, and an anchor to ground oneself in a space.

On page 41: "In the city, everyone I ever meet asks me if I'm going to go back. Back to the city I came from."

In the places that you have lived in, what is home for you? Are you still searching for it, or do you carry it inside of you as a memory, or a moment in the present, a physical embodiment of this construct?

JC: I love that question! I wrote this book largely when I was [in my late twenties]. I am 33 now and I still feel very attached to everything in the book. Then in some ways I feel like I have matured a little bit, maybe I'm a different person. The way I think about love is that there can be multiple loves. You don't have to put it all on one person. You can love multiple people at once, and it doesn't have to be like there's a scarcity to it. And I feel that way with this concept of home now.

So, I can think of Seattle [as] home because I have been here so long, and Chicago will always be home, and a lot of these other places like New York City and Zion feel like home too. It's been magical to let go of having to always need to be in a place; it's constricting, straining, on a place to insist it always be the same.

SK: Who are poets/writers you admire?

JC: Tommy Pico, francine j. harris, Sandra Cisneros, Ada Limón, Natalie Diaz, Lucie Brock-Broido, Brigit Kelly, Jorie Graham, Mary Ruefle, Allen Ginsburg, T.S. Eliot, John Keats. I recently read Sandra Simmonds' Orlando [which] was super interesting. I admire the essays of Joan Didion, Jia Tolentino, Eula Biss, and the writing of Virginia Woolf.

SK: What do you wish for the reader to take away from *Should You Lose All Reason(s)*?

JC: I want them to feel soothed and less alone. My wish through writing the book was to feel less alone, and I wish now readers are thinking about trying to make these human connections. If they can make broader connections between their story and how it is tied to the larger story of what is happening with climate change and Indigenous rights, if they can recognize the land and how it's been so important in nourishing [our spirits], that would be so good. I have been trying to do a land acknowledgment in each place that I have been on my book tour. I think it's a good first step for people to start doing that learning, too, and taking care of the place that they are in.

The interview has been edited and condensed for clarity. ■

Taste Korea is cooking at its essence

By Misty Shock Rule
IE Contributor

As a Korean adoptee, cooking Korean food connects me with my heritage. Food is also a source of connection for Ae Jin Huys — adopted from South Korea at the age of six by a Belgian family — as documented in her cookbook *Taste Korea: Korean recipes with local ingredients*.

The subtitle of the book, which was originally published in Dutch, suggests its focus is adapting Korean food for Western audiences. Instead, *Taste Korea* is a meditation on traditional Korean food and methods.

As Huys told a daily Korean newspaper, food is what brought her back to Korea. In her 20s, a Korean friend living in Belgium made food for her.

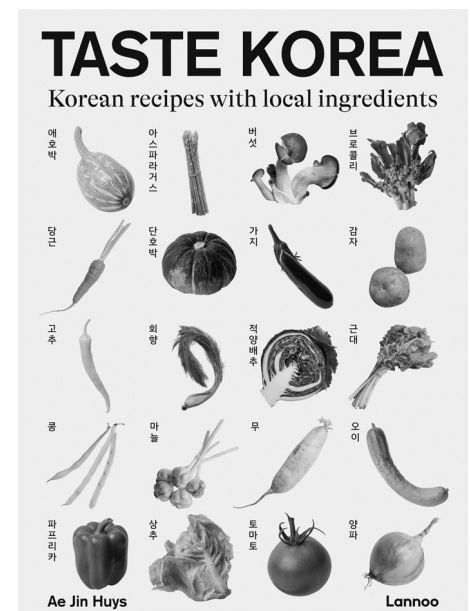
"There, I recognized dishes from my childhood that I didn't even know I knew about," she told the *JoonAng Daily*. "It was an unannounced flashback and trigger to my childhood."

She went on to make yearly visits to Korea, where she learned from Korean masters. "I have collected countless Korean recipes by tasting in numerous eateries, watching housewives at the stoves, [and] receiving teaching from many chefs," she writes in *Taste Korea's* preface.

Photos and testimonials from some of these masters are intermixed with the book's recipes, some of them contributed by the masters themselves. We hear from Wook Wan Seunim, an expert on Korean temple food. Another master, Yun Wang Soon, shares how she inherited sonmat from her mother. Sonmat is translated as "hand taste" and is defined as the ability to flavor food "by feel," not by using measurements.

Eating Korean food in the U.S., I've eaten a lot of Korean barbecue, bibimbap and sundubu. I've gotten good at making kimbap,

TASTE KOREA: Continued on page 26. . .



Picking up from Raymond Chandler, *The Goodbye Coast* asks: What stops us from living better lives?

By Alpha Goto
IE Contributor

The Goodbye Coast by Joe Ide is a well written detective novel with lots of twists, turns and surprises. The characters are well developed and provide an interesting conduit for social commentary, off beat humor, and existential rumination to flow.

The main character is none other than detective Philip Marlowe of Raymond Chandler fame, cut in the classic '40s genre of the rugged individualistic gumshoe and dropped into contemporary Southern California Hollywood culture.

Marlowe went into law enforcement because he believed in right and wrong, and wanted justice for crime victims and punishment for perpetrators. Marlowe loved the process of uncovering hidden truths to make things right. But he got kicked out of the police academy because he was unable to do things their way. Marlowe lives with ambiguity. He wavers from feeling that "he's the ruler of his own private universe" to "he's just a cog in a random universe" to "there are

forces greater than himself effecting the universe."

That drives him a little crazy, I think.

I particularly enjoyed it when author Ide used unexpected analogies and word choice to accentuate a point:

"A breeze made the willows shimmer. A blue dragonfly skimmed over the golden yarrow... 'A business acquaintance said you returned his retainer because he was, I quote "a festering boil on the rectum of humanity.' Yesterday I had lunch with one of your former clients. You told her to get her fallopian tubes filled with cement so her husband sperm would turn back and her eggs would die." ... "Even among hardened criminals, Tato and his crew were freaks, mutants, cancer cells that didn't metastasize but stayed within themselves, waiting like moray eels to strike out of the darkness with an evil grin."

Even though Marlowe has a cynical view of humanity, he has an appreciation for certain idiosyncrasies of others and their life experiences. Marlowe sees life as a stream of challenges and some people make the

most of it and, if not prosper, endure and mature, while others go the opposite route. But he's not sure why, or what makes the difference.

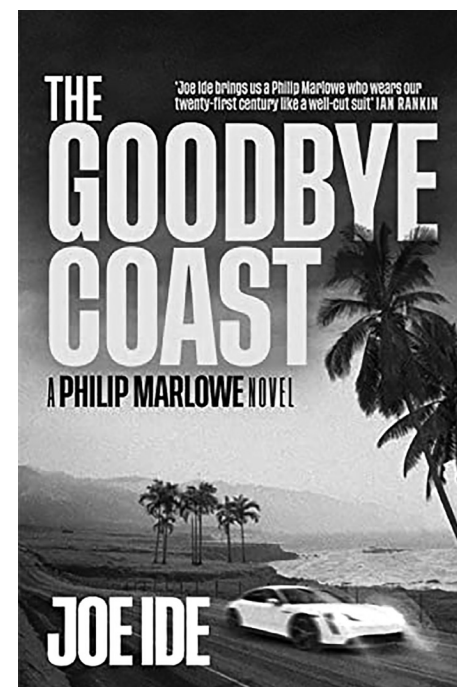
Marlowe believes some people never change, some people who want to change, try, but can't, and some wish they would want to want to change but they all get shipwrecked by the storms of life within and without.

Marlowe meets with his mentor and friend Basilio, when he gives Marlowe the case and twice after for advice. Each time they meet at Basilio's favorite restaurant Panda Express, which seems to be a sarcastic innuendo. Each time they meet, Basilio wears a t-shirt bearing a similar sounding but unequivocally different message: "Vote for Shaniqua"... "Congrats Shaniqua"... "Impeach Shaniqua"

Maybe that is to highlight stages of human interaction and perspective. Here, the "Urban Dictionary" says that "Shaniqua" is a name that mocks an African American inner city female posing a "ghetto" vibe.

Maybe a good detective story should mock the lives we live by calling us out to

answer why we live the way do, and what imprisons us from living better, more honest and humane lives. *The Goodbye Coast* is that good detective story. ■



In tender debut memoir *Meet Me Tonight In Atlantic City*, Jane Wong examines the layers of personal and communal history

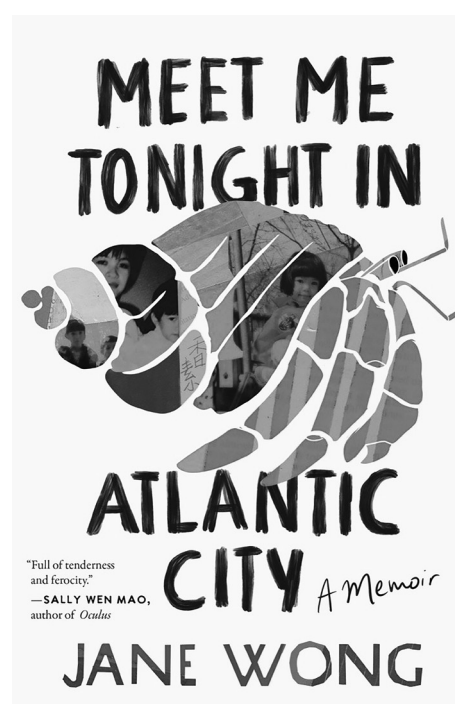
By Elinor Serumgard
IE Contributor

In the late 1980s, Jane Wong grew up a restaurant baby: Helping prep wontons, napping on bags of rice, and playing games with her younger brother. Her family's story seems to be the classic "American Dream," but as the years went on, the restaurant closed because of her father's gambling.

Wong reminds readers that the casinos would target Asians specifically, and that many families would suffer the effects of gambling and addiction. In her debut memoir *Meet Me Tonight In Atlantic City*, Jane Wong takes history — both personal and communal — and reexamines the layers it holds.

After losing the restaurant, Wong's mother took up night shifts with the postal service. Wong describes her mother's unwavering resolve to provide for her children and the special psychic connection the author shares with her. Memoirs are based on an author's memories, in a genre-bending move, Wong creates a new character: wongmom.com. This website is a fount of her mother Jin's knowledge and advice.

Wong writes vulnerably, recounting stories of relationship abuse, of racism, and of not being taken seriously. In fact, in the chap-



ter "The Object of Love," Wong denounces professionals in the publishing industry who urged her to focus her memoir on the days of being in the restaurant rather than including parts of her life marred by relationship abuse. What publishers fail to recognize is that this is her Chinese American experi-

ence. Just because Wong doesn't paint a picture of a perfect "American Dream" doesn't mean she is not sharing a vital experience.

The writing in *Meet Me Tonight In Atlantic City* is beautiful. Wong is a poet, evident through the meter of her lines and her vibrant imagery. The memoir is not a linear narrative, the past and present are intertwined and includes cultural history that add context to present day injustices.

This book isn't all sad, far from it. Wong writes with fierce joy over connecting with friends and family and on the wonder she finds in her students. This book is a love letter to labor put into the world.

One aspect of community she touches on is her mother's coworkers at the postal center. How they helped her mom figure out how to use a computer for Wong's second book launch, which was held via Zoom, as well as their support of her book even though they did not read poetry.

Wong won the James W. Ray Distinguished Artist Award for Washington Artists, which included an opportunity to exhibit work at the Frye Art Museum in Seattle. Wong's show describes the opening night of her exhibit, and her family's reaction. Her show was titled after one of her poems, "After Preparing the Altar, the Ghosts Feast Feverishly." Wong's poems explore

hunger, feeding her ancestors, and healing pains from the past. She writes about worrying over what her family would think of her displaying their hunger so publicly. When they do come to see the opening night, Wong writes about joy and awe, not shame.

Meet Me Tonight In Atlantic City is a narrative that resists being a single story. As Wong writes, this is "not a story of small enterprises." Instead, this book is a lyrical endeavor that unpacks generational trauma, racism, and love that is found within community.

Wong's writing nourished me and emboldened me to take pride in my own history. The way she writes is full of tenderness, but also ferocity. In sharing a multifaceted story of her life, she gives a fuller picture of what it means to be a person, because we are all multifaceted. We are made of our families, our communities, and our ancestors who came before us. *Meet Me Tonight In Atlantic City* illustrates this, and that it is up to us to figure out how to piece our histories together.

This is Jane Wong's first work of non-fiction, and I hope there is more to come.

In addition to her memoir, Wong has published two books of poetry *How To Not Be Afraid of Everything* (2021) and *Overpour* (2016). ■

IE ARTS

TASTE KOREA: Continued from page 24. . .

my daughter's favorite food. This book was just what I needed as a boost for my Korean cooking, going beyond these familiar dishes.

True to the subtitle, the book is organized by ingredients, offering recipes for a wide variety of vegetables and a few proteins. But the main focus of the book is Korean jangs, or fermented sauces, such as gochujang and doenjang. Their flavors define Korean cooking, Huys argues.

"If you have one or more jars of jang

at home, you can open this book on any humdrum evening and cook Korean," she writes.

In *Taste Korea*, Korean cooking is brought down to its essence, as embodied by its jangs. Many of the recipes include a jang as a marinade, broth or dipping sauce. Everything is simplified overall, with the directions summed up in a few sentences or a paragraph. The book made Korean cooking more accessible while deepening my understanding by introducing new dishes and concepts.

Recently, I made oi bibim guksu, which consists of cold wheat noodles, cucumber and a sauce made of gochujang, rice syrup

and sesame oil — a cold Korean spaghetti. I looked up the same recipe on the website for Maangchi, a popular Korean cook. Her recipe had a lot more ingredients and would have made prep more involved.

I opted for *Taste Korea's* recipe. I felt okay skipping the more complex recipe, because as the book told me, the jang is the essential flavor.

The book ends with recipes for different jangs, some of which require fermenting for six months or a year. Because of the complexity of the processes, the recipes didn't seem directed toward the Western cook, someone new to Korean cooking or anybody learning how to "taste Korea."

Instead, they are a tribute to the masters Huys has learned from and record their work for posterity. The recipes showcase just how complex, intricate and difficult it is to make these jangs and how much we should honor the skill and expertise behind it.

I sensed Huys' deep admiration and affection for these mentors, who did much more than teach her their craft.

"I found [Korean cooking] to be a good way to connect back with my childhood and my roots because it was [through] my passion," Huys told the *JoonAng Daily*.

By teaching me about Korean food, Huys is helping me do the same. ■

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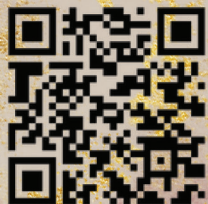
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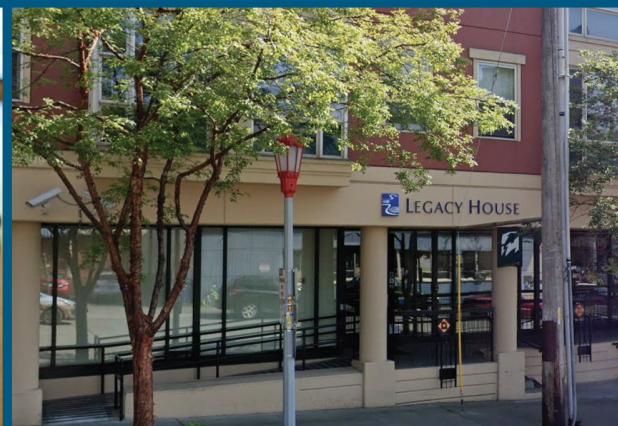
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