

Words for my forthcoming book

(2010-2011)

Anna Yin's poetry provides a gracious blend of elements from both Asian and Western poetic traditions. She says in one poem, "I wake to listen." Indeed, she does listen: she listens especially to the natural environment, dreams and the longings of the heart. There is a mysterious quality about some of her poems which pulls at the reader's feelings. Images (such as "a river / where a black rose floated," and metaphors (such as tea grown cold, bread in a toaster and "a hooked fish") will not readily be forgotten. You will want to put this book on the nightstand or coffee table where you can pick them up and read them again.

-- Wilda Morris / President of Poets and Patrons of Chicago and author of Szechwan Shrimp and Fortune Cookie Poems from a Chinese Restaurant.

An authentic, direct tone brings the author's native Chinese voice to these poems, which are charming and fresh at their best. There is a Mary Oliver-like feel of 'merging with nature' captured in simple diction and similes, and unusual images.

Elana Wolff/ Poet and Editor from Toronto

~~~~~\*\*\*\*\*~~~~~

It is a rare thing to come across a first collection of poems that leaves the reader feeling completely captivated and awed. Such is the case with Anna Yin's collection, "The Door Ajar." Writing mainly in short narrative lyrics, Yin's highly imagistic style brims with freshly-conceived similes and metaphors and an economy of language that belies the powerful messages of loss and love. These are poems that remain with you long after you have finished reading them; a collection that constantly surprises and delights with its beautifully-rendered images, unexpected turns of phrases, and its equally powerful quiet moments of longing and regret. Simply dazzling!

Laura Lush / Poet and Instructor from University of Toronto



Anna Yin's new book, as a sequence of two movements of the psyche (in the Greek sense), named by the author as "There Must Be Something", "We Turn Into Them" (the two sections of the book), begins with complementary, although also contrasting, epigraphs drawn from the poets of Emily Dickinson ("The soul should always stand ajar, ready to welcome the ecstatic experience"), and the closure against the transcendent of Sylvia Plath ("I shut my eyes and all the world drops dead; I lift my eyes and all is born again"). This, of course, is to locate with some poetic precision the problem of epiphany versus egophany (to use a term developed by philosopher Eric Voegelin to describe the structure of consciousness typical of the modern ideologue, who experiences reality as an act of his or her own will, a will which eventually turns upon itself in its efforts to "recreate" reality).

The poems in this book explore this dialectic (in the Platonic sense) between openness and closure revealed in the experiences of ordinary life, and in this respect Ms Yin's work is representative of the People's Poetry Tradition at its best (in 2005 she received the Ted Platos Memorial Award for People's Poetry) More subtly, (and less ideologically), than modern western-influenced Chinese poets such as Bei Dao (in his *Unlock*, for example), Ms Yin, like the great Western Romantic poets in the productive aspect of their pursuit of the source of *Sehnsucht* (longing), often learned from Chinese sources, concludes her meditation with an advance upon the Dickinsonian perspective, replacing the rather with a clear vision of the imaginative landscape seen prior to the explorations of the intellectual mystic:

"It is the sowing season,  
Your finger points to the distant hills  
Where terrace farms spiral  
Like ladders to heaven!"  
- *Beyond Our Knowing*

Terry Barker / Humber College