



An Emigrant's Winter

Pui Ying Wong

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Pui Ying Wong's *An Emigrant's Winter* offers fresh eyes on both Chinese and American landscapes. Being the stranger gives the poet-narrator a visionary lens to see paint "almost undone / by humidity and time," to identify with a gecko "playing dead / with its eyes open." The poet is an undercover observer, hiding out front like the gecko, hiding to survive. Boundary-crossing poet Pui Ying Wong is always lyrical, no matter where she lights. By contrast with the images from Hong Kong ("the neighbors, quiet / as an unstrung guitar.") Wong's America is charged with big stories and sounds: "Her roads link two oceans, / meeting only in icy water / like her political parties." ("America is Big") Our poet is a wry observer: "...her advertisements / try to sell you the real you." Wong's poetical roads also link oceans and nations. Every poem in the collection offers song and insight, wit and complex emotion compressed artfully. There's no stuffiness, no academic filler. Pui Ying Wong's work gives us hope: that poetry still has the power to move us, to wake us, to enhance our seeing. The poems are wrought like the finest ironwork balconies overlooking San Francisco or Paris. The poems are tender like the voice of a lover who knows how to use language to hold us all in an embrace. This is a major book that should win both national and international literary prizes.

--**Marilyn Kallet**, author of 17 books, including *The Love That Moves Me*, poetry from Black Widow Press

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