



AN ANTHOLOGY OF POEMS
BY AFTER-SCHOOL POETS

at the Excelsior Branch Library

A joint project of Poets-in-the-Schools
& the San Francisco Arts Commission



Tuesday Songs

An Anthology of After-School Poetry

Tommy Kuang

Oh Kyky

April, 1994

Edgar Tena

Stephanie Dunlap

Lisette Rodriguez

Lourdes Castillo

California Poets in the Schools (CPTS) programs are made

possible in part by the Langer Foundation, the California Arts Council, the

National Endowment for the Arts and the Gap Foundation.

Li Shi

For more information or to become a supporting member of CPTS, please

contact the state-wide office:

870 Market Street, Suite 807

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FOREWARD & BACK

What you are about to read is the cumulative work of nine weeks of poetry workshops for teenagers. Each poem here was written by someone between the ages of 13 and 18. Over the course of the program, we, as a group, decided that what we wanted was on the whackier side of poetry. Therefore, these works often arose from experiments, word plays, mistranslations, and general buzzings in the ear of poetry. I'd like to thank the students for their dedication & tireless participation— who would have thought so many teens would come to write poetry after school! Many of the workshop participants are students of English as a Second Language, and I would like to commend them for delving into this new territory in a creative way.

To my students: I leave with a little of each of you in me. May you leave with a little poetry in you.

Eléni Sikélianòs
California Poets in the Schools
April, 1994

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THE POETS

David Tin

Gary Liang

Lisa Leung

Diego Tsai

Helen Li

Han Buu Giang

Ona Mirkinson

Tommy Kuang

Daniel Xu

Ricky Ho

Edgar Tena

Stephanie Dunlap

Lisette Rodriguez

Mai Chau Phuong

Phiem Nguyen

Wing Fai Wong

Hue Quyen Dang

Lourdes Castillo

Wahkit Ng

Tina Ouyang

Suki Li

Faye Kuang

LIFE

My life is like a sheet of white paper.

For me to put down the song.

For the world to write music on.

For you to sing it.

But no one will know the song.

Except me.

by **Helen Li**

POEM OF LYING

The sun follows around the earth.

The earth is rest.

The sun is work.

The earth is lazy like a turtle.

The sun never stops.

The sun as small as my friend Tommy.

The earth as big as me.

by **David Tin**

TELL ME LIES....

My teachers give out passes to the beach instead of passes to the bathroom. They let me talk and run WILD all day long. Parties instead of tests, money instead of grades. My teacher's classroom would be the beach. The thin white sand would replace the dirty rundown strips of wood they call "floors." The only homework I would have would be to get a great tan! THIS IS THE LIFE!!! Beach Blanket High is where I go. No worries, no worries, I tell you so!

by **Lisa Leung**

I WALK ON THE SEA

I walk on the sea to school every day
And yesterday I saw a house on fire
under the sea. That scared me.
At night, I dreamed I sat in a boat
that slid down from a mountain.
Suddenly, my mom held me up-
side down and called "Wake up"
and she gave me a ring to wear
on my toe.

by **Han Giang**

Chinese New Year and Chinese Moon Festival

Chinese moon gives light to the Great Wall
Chinese South Sea lets people swim in its whole body
Chinese pizza is different from Italian pizza
Many things are made in China
Like jam, toys and food, etc.
Beautiful country, beautiful Yellow River.
And beautiful Kuang.

by **David Tin**

The Blue Sky

The blue sky looks so colorful
and beautiful, it makes me feel good.
At night, the sweet love under the moon.

The music of the waves makes my
ear feel so soft.

The clock keeps running just like
the river in the water.

by **Tommy Kuang**

RECIPE FOR BRAVERY

Turn your body on , Then turn it 360 degrees

Just do what you want to do

Then it will make you feel that the things around you

are strong

Next, take 100% to ensure that things

Will always be a success

It tastes like danger

but it doesn't matter

I feeds something that looks like Robotcops

and.....

TURN YOUR BODY ON NOW

by Gary Liang

A PACK OF LIES

Group Poem

Monday to Friday I stay in bed

and sleep with my eyes open. I wear my

bunny slippers on my head & listen

to animal music——

OOOUUWW!

LIES

The Moon bursts open

& falls on my head,

flowers give off a terrible smell & money

rains into the apartments of Alberta, Nebraska.

The Sun gives out crazy yell to see all her children

broken, the moon takes off his hundred shoes & throws them

one by one

at the littlest

sisters

in the plaza.

by Eléni Sikélianòs

HOMELESS

ELÉNI WANTED ME TO LIE
BUT I DON'T KNOW HOW TO
BECAUSE I NEVER LIED
I NEVER LIED SINCE I WAS BORN

I DON'T LIKE TO LIE

I NEVER TRIED IT
FOR A REALLY LONG TIME
I DON'T EVEN KNOW

WHAT THIS WORD MEANS

"LIE"

THE REASON I DON'T LIE

IS BECAUSE

THE WORLD IS SO BEAUTIFUL

IT IS BECAUSE

THE WORLD IS SO PEACEFUL

IT IS BECAUSE

NOBODY LIES IN THIS WORLD

NOBODY IS LYING IN THIS WORLD

EVERYBODY IS HONEST

EVERY POLITICIAN

EVERY BUSINESSMAN

EVERY SALESMAN

ALL OF THEM NEVER LIED

THIS WORLD IS SO GREAT

NO WARS

NO POLLUTION

NO LIERS

I LOVE THIS WORLD

SO SO SO SO

MUCH

by **Diego Tsai**

SONG

A song for myself.

A song for my life.

A song for me to travel through your mind, through your heart.

A song for me to run around you when you were sad.

A song for me to represent my word without writing or saying anything.

A song that could lead you through my heart.

A song that you love to hear when you are alone.

A song for me to step in your house barefooted.

A song of the bird who used to sing in San Francisco.

A song to bring me to cool Hawaii.

A song that led you to Mexico with an empty stomach.

A song that keeps you and me together.

by **Helen Li**

HAPPY COFFEE

Group Poem

Happy Coffee, I am beautiful! Money crazy, Love
Honey, I'm Love Hungry, pencil pig. Excellent Tommy,
What is moon? Taiwan, O beautiful Kuang.

JANUARY, CHICAGO

Love Chicago

like freedom

green money

friendship, talking and singing

Latoya & Friday night music

telephones, cars, silk

it's talking

walking Rights, Black and

Gold, Chicago Diamonds

by **Stephanie Dunlap**

HOMELESS

On a cold winter day, on the street

The wind blows as hard as it can.

It feels like everyone hates me

I feel like crying, tears falling out

It feels all blocked

No one cares

No one helps

Nowhere to go

O, nowhere to go

It's over

The tears are gone

Happy will come.

It's over

It's over

by **Wing Fai Wong**

MY POEM AND YOU KNOW IT

I travel all around the world

with my pj's on

I never talk on the phone

and I always stay home

I stare out into space

I put my face against my

plate. But I'll never tell

lies. You can see by

my eyes.

I don't like Boys

I don't make no noise

and I run to the moon

with a big fat spoon

and I am a poet and

Hey you know it

I'm not conceited

But that's my poem

and you know it.

by **Lisette Rodriguez**

SKULL

Skull where is the other part of your body?
Are your bones not strong enough to hold you together?
You look like an alien spaceship
Where your teeth are your weapon.
The nose in your head
is where the laser shoots out
The bones of the eye
are like the wings of a spaceship.

by **Daniel Xu**

RAM'S HORN

Group Poem

It's the DNA of a horse
It reminds me of a buffalo running
through the grasslands of South America
It's a saxophone that I play at dawn
& all the kids come running
It's a tornado ripping up houses in Texas
It's as ancient as a Barbarian's head

POEM TO THE SOUND

It sounds like the dark
sounds like the dead

Life starts again
a long life
a person waiting
for a long life
The life goes up and down
It never stops

The life going down and down
to the dark
close to death
to the end of a life

by **Tina Ouyang**

POEM TO THE SOUND

It sounds like——

a girl dancing
a party for the forest, for the animals
the beginning for one morning
the sunrise

a boy stealing food
an old woman missing her country
a sunset

a baby crying
a couple walking in the dark night
a mother waiting for her children
a girl swimming in the river
rocks thrown into the river

by **Suki Li**

MONDAY TO FRIDAY

I ask the sun to go home
I ask the moon star to come and stay
I kiss the moon
The moon is shy, he goes away
Sun up, the moon star needs to leave
I use magic to make him stay.

by **Faye Kwang**

SURREALIST

group poem

I consumed chips of plastic in a sea of bricks
I swam in a flower of flowers and
I almost drowned in a flag of United States monkeys
But I was saved by a me of devils in a space-storm of slaves.

SOUND

It sounds like a car honking at people.

Like a drunk man does

not know what he's doing

He crashes Boom! then.....

He says to nobody

What a day

What a day

I've been to heaven

I've been to hell

I've been to all the places I've never been before.

This time I'll stay there for good—

in the garbage can

Where the heart machine goes Beep.....

He dies

Then I felt the moon crash

on earth and

I screamed

Help!

It sounds like the dark

by **Wahkit Ng**

Life starts again

a long life

a person waiting

for a long life

The life goes up and down

It never stops

The life going down

to the dark

close to death

to the dark

to the dark

But I was saved

PUNCH GLASSES LUNCH

A mistranslation from Rilke

Group Poem

Oh! Why am I always a lemon

And not a vegetable? Itchy gloves,

dear bear, well done. Eating itchy

lunch, it's upset— my shirt's undone!

I thought itchy gloves in my boot.

That's very beautiful.

DON'T GO AWAY

Remember the great time we had
running together in the sea
Together sitting at the beach until
the sun set
Together watching the full moon
at the tall mountain
Together at night rowing a boat from China
to Africa
Together
in the morning kissing until the sun rose
Don't go, Don't go

by **Tommy Kuang**

THE COUNTRY MUSIC

Sitting on the porch of my house
just hearing the country music
It makes me feel like dancing along
I hear someone is crying
for somebody to be saved.

by **Lourdes Castillo**

LOVE

The rose of my girlfriend's face
the Chain of love of pearls
Love of Love into
our hearts of us
The flowers of paper in a pool
filled with blue of sky
fear and love
fear of love
love of sweet
sweet of lips
lips of heart
heart of red.

by **Han Giang**

LAS UVAS

Desde que probe

las uvas, I liked

las morenitas.

I told you not to scatter

las uvas by

the road, because *la*

gente que pasa cut

off the best bunch.

Y asi las corte

Y las voy a dar,

four for a *peso*,

and two for a *real*.

Y asi las corte

Y las voy a dar,

four for a *peso*,

and two for a *real*.

Pedazo of a rod,

Pedazo of half

a lemon.

The one that has

amor from a

distance, *se*

acuesta pero no

duerme.

Y asi las corte

Y las voy a dar,

four for a *peso*,

and two for a *real*.

Y asi las corte

Y las voy a dar,

four for a *peso*,

and two for a *real*.

by Edgar Tena

1. *desde que probe las uvas* – since I tasted grapes
2. *las morenitas* – that's how we call the girls with brown skin
3. *la genta que pasa* – the people who pass by
4. *Y asi las corte, Y las voy a dar* – and that's how I cut them, and that's how I'm going to sell them.
5. *Real* – old Mexican money
6. *se acuesta pero no duerme* – he just lays down, but he can't go to sleep

WHAT THE MUSIC SOUNDS LIKE

It sounds like a snake
coming out
from a hole.

It makes me feel
happy like
someone playing
jump rope.

It sounds like someone
dies and many cry.

It sounds like someone
walking down the hill
in high heels.

It sounds like
African country.
Like I was playing music
with African people.

It sounds like someone
is playing
outside in the yard.

It makes me feel happy
because it makes me remember
playing with my grandfather
But now he's gone.

by **Phiem Nguyen**

AN EXQUISITE CORPSE

Group Poem

The cars rush by at eye level where
I love the moon ... moon ... & stars
are shining

& constantly talking about lions
in the zoo where we go to see the biggest fish in the
world, which is beautiful, too

But I am
eating a big red orange with
leaves all

around which fell down &
knocked all the angels out.

THE NINE WATER WOMEN

The Nine Water Women
bomb the blue bay
while the rabbit wheels &
leaves the seventeen swirls of fun
on the bear curled around the air.
The cold stone tiger
& Bluejays
in the clean skies, lean as ice
sweet as sugar & strawberries.
Airplanes land as music becomes
a pear. The bus crashes
the Independence Earthquake lands
the cool lovely walls break out as
the Nine Water Women leave
by **Lisa Leung**

THE CELLO

It sounds like the birds
hopping and singing
in a tree.

It sounds like someone's
getting married

or someone died

The music makes me feel
happy...

It sounds like my friends crying

or like someone is making cookies— Yum!

It sounds like someone dancing

It sounds like we are going to have
a party!

by **Mai Chau**

ATTENDANCE— *mistranslated from Nicanor Parra's Advertencias*

Seems to be protected in Australia,

Easy cops, Georgia, Around the World

England's recorders seem to be in Philadelphia

THANK YOU

Including happy, things around the beautiful beaches

I'm protecting my family forever

YET, YET, YET

by **Gary Liang**

SOUNDS

It sounds like I was in India
watching the snakes dance controlled by a flute
It sounds like on a street
where cars are stuck in traffic
It sounds like a jungle
and monkeys crying for food
It sounds like a very sad movie
that will make me cry for years
It sounds like in a ghost town
that has a thousand ghosts chasing you
It makes me feel like I was in paradise
watching the sunset with my girlfriend on a boat.

by **Daniel Xu**

ACROSTIC / group poem

Mushrooms look like

Umbrellas eaten by me

Said Han while reading the *San Mateo Times* which only

Costs six-fifty in Japan Town.

Lousy Money! Crazy Baby! Half-Half I am

Eating mushroom people with

Someone else's mouth.

A SEED POD'S ODE

A roaring dragon,
dried up mistletoe
little baby turtles
swimming for their
lives.

an old graduation tassel
from the 1950's
or maybe a brush
that the great Picasso
once used.

by **Lisa Leung**

I am walking in a big piece of grassland.

It is all green

I can hear the sunshine

I feel so warm.

I am flying in the huge sky.

It is all blue

I can hear the clouds are moving

step

by

step

moving toward me.

They are holding me

They are holding me so gently.

I can feel that

they are so soft

so soft

so soft

I am walking on the moon

It is all gray

I can hear the rocks on the moon are moving

I am not alone, rocks are with me

Rocks are moving quietly on the surface

I can't see them

but I can hear them

I am floating in space

It is all black

I can hear the planets are turning

They are turning without rest.

Oh, I heard someone else . . .

. . . I can . . . hear . . . that . . .

People are rapping off earth's surface

They are rapping hard . . .

That hurts

That hurts

The earth is crying

yes, she is crying . . .

Oh, No

The planets are bounding against each other.

They are bounding hard

millions and billions of little rocks are flying

I am running in the rock rain

I am just one of them

I run

I run

I run

Jubilation Hamburger

I lost per million in SIDAMA but I don't
know where that is.

Sore legs points do less than tired age, sore less.

Why payless?

In the court he said
sun. Son.

艾地

New York

by Han Giang, Gary Liang, David Tin, Minh Giang & Ricky Ho

THE CRAZY PLAYING

Sun TV Moon on the table running glasses

Like soccerball, football, the sky plays an apple as music
on a basketball team and

THE TREES ARE SPENDING A LOT OF THE FRESH AIR

IN THE WORLD

Jumping milk flowers, and happy colors are learning songs

Computers eat cookies while

The basketball team was playing love games for everyone

by Gary Liang

CRAZINESS

Vanilla Rum Skin

A Slice of Turquoise Sky

Diggable Mushrooms Marinate

In Between Bizarre Clouds

Mango Waves

An Ocean of Tears

A Dark Pupil Peeking

From Behind Mangled Hair

Smoking Ganja From a Crazy Pipe

A Silk Sidewalk That Leads

To the Pharcyde

by Ona Mirkinson

CRYSTAL

The purple of the Iris
in the pure ice and water.

The brightness of snow
in the cold winter of China.

The sharpness of the sword
which would cut the pure heart in half.

The fantastic shape of the crystal
which looks like a million mountains joined together.

Crystal Crystal Crystal

Where do you come from?

from the sky
from the land
from the ocean

I came from the evil eyes of everyone.

by **Helen Li**

RECIPE FOR RECYCLING

Get a recycled box.

Take all the newspapers you read,
all the cans you used.

more bottles than you can count.

everyone's forgotten dreams.

A year's worth of shed hair.

One gallon of wasted shower water.

Mix them all together.

Put the mess in the box.

It feeds all the people in the world.

It tastes like caring.

Please make often to save the earth.

by **David Tin**

*My life is like a sheet of white paper.
For me to put down the song.*
—Helen Li

THE POETS

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California Poets in the Schools (CPITS) is the oldest and largest artist-in-residence program in the country. Since 1964 they have been bringing trained, professional poets into the classroom. The program's focus is to encourage students to write, using their own Imagination & life experiences to create original poetry. The poet in the classroom is a living model of an individual committed to imaginative language, the creative process, and critical thinking.

Special thanks to Copy Central for helping us with the printing of this anthology.