Journal of Southeast Asian American
Education and Advancement

Journal of Southeast Asian American Education and Advancement

Volume 5 | Issue 1

Article 7

2010

Selected Poems

Jai Arun Ravine
eucalyptusraven@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: <https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/jsaaea>

Part of the [Asian American Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Ravine, Jai Arun (2010) "Selected Poems," *Journal of Southeast Asian American Education and Advancement*. Vol. 5 : Iss. 1, Article 7.

DOI: 10.7771/2153-8999.1008

Available at: <https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/jsaaea/vol5/iss1/7>

This document has been made available through Purdue e-Pubs, a service of the Purdue University Libraries.
Please contact epubs@purdue.edu for additional information.

This is an Open Access journal. This means that it uses a funding model that does not charge readers or their institutions for access. Readers may freely read, download, copy, distribute, print, search, or link to the full texts of articles. This journal is covered under the [CC BY-NC-ND license](#).

1

parted her thighs for my birth wun atid red sun day inscribed vowels on my chest

I did not find until later I am always looking for them in the bend of my fingers
in my failed pronunciations: jung wat amphur mueang

moo ban to grasp a tendril, astral, ancestral hum.
conjuring their bodies from ink and sound I see stunted cells

that do not know their blood has found me eager to plant stems
I watch for a deepening in my skin remedy for pocked face

fluency in tongue and memory of Syam before it was ever named—
memory of when they named me

Ravine – Selected Poems

dek pom daeng¹

I am red
a red child
a red boy who eats fire
half eaten
half child with a half life
the mark of white and red
rented a wife
rented half
split the rent in half
child eating red
red headed boy eating fire
half boy half
genitals that hang
when on all fours
step daughter
half sister half
brother one and a half
rented wife with a head
of fire

¹ “Red-haired child,” referring to the offspring of Thai women and white men conceived during sex tourism or military leave. Luk kreung, or “half child,” also refers to someone who is half Thai and half white.

Excerpt from *perm pew see kow sukapub dee: for healthy white skin*

kae piang

mer kong di chun lap fun
my mother dreams of pulling me by the hair. I shave my head and in her dream
she is strangled by muddy locks that grow wild like fire.
I wish to be that beautiful. suay suay jung

but then again, mai chai.
mai dai na kha I cannot change this blood.
luk kreung. one half, one half of a whole.

screaming is harder when it is halved,
when my white father screams at my brown mother,
when my brown mother screams at her white lies,
muea my face screams at my hands.

chun kit wa—kit gon—
your blood was eating at my bone.

Ravine – Selected Poems

kohn dieow

no one pays me any attention because I am not the beautiful Asian girl, I cannot make my tongue sound as though it was harvested here. I try by not speaking, by waiing, by being as quiet as possible—and then the only noise is that of the farang around the table waiting for food. the English language is like assault rifles here, where Thai teenagers read the newspaper & talk on their cell phones & laugh & share dtom yom ngung and pay in correct change

without a sound.

I try to be polite & this means I do not open my mouth.

only for ro tee, pad thai, guway dteow by the side of the street pet pet freeing my eyes from their sockets. I want to become smaller, browner, less noticeable, just like the other Thai girls on mopeds, small torsos & thin hips, in black skirts & white uniform shirts, clips in their hair, black black black long & straight & flying,

which is what I catch when I think about falling into them.

About the Author

Jai Arun Ravine is a trans-identified, multi-disciplinary writer, dancer, visual and performing artist of mixed Thai and white American heritage. Jai received an MFA in Writing & Poetics from Naropa University and a BA in Interdisciplinary Asian Studies from Hollins University. A Kundiman Fellow, Jai's first chapbook, *IS THIS JANUARY*, is available from Corollary Press. For more information, visit <http://jaiarunravine.wordpress.com/>

Volume 5(2010)

Journal of Southeast Asian American Education & Advancement

www.JSAAEA.org

A peer-reviewed
scholarly journal
published by the
National Association
for the Education &
Advancement of
Cambodian, Laotian,
and Vietnamese
Americans (NAFEA)

Editor

Dr. Wayne E. Wright
University of Texas, San Antonio

Associate Editors

Dr. Chhany Sak-Humphry
University of Hawaii

Dr. KimOanh Nguyen-Lam
California State University, Long Beach

Book Review Editor

Dr. Vichet Chhuon
University of Minnesota

Creative Works Editor

Bryan Thao Worra
Lao Assistance Center

Special Advisor

Gregory Green
Curator, Echols Collection on Southeast Asia, Cornell University Library

Editorial Assistant

Kathleen Langham
University of Texas, San Antonio

Comments and questions for the editorial staff may be directed to jsaaea@lists.sis.utsa.edu

Editorial Review Board

Dr. Carl L. Bankston III
Tulane University

Dr. Phala Chea
Lowell Public Schools

Dr. Loan Dao
Cancer Prevention Institute of California

Dr. Sophal Ear
U.S. Naval Postgraduate School

Dr. Samlong Inthaly
Minneapolis Public Schools

Dr. Kevin K. Kumashiro
University of Illinois, Chicago

Dr. Pollie Bith-Melander
Asian and Pacific Islander Wellness Center

Dr. George Chigas
University of Massachusetts, Lowell

Dr. Changming Duan
University of Missouri, Kansas City

Dr. Nancy H. Hornberger
University of Pennsylvania

Dr. Peter Nien-Chu Kiang
University of Massachusetts, Boston

Dr. Stacey Lee
University of Wisconsin, Madison

Ravine – Selected Poems

Dr. David Chanpanha Ley
Montgomery County Public Schools

Dr. Bic Ngo
University of Minnesota

Dr. Leakhena Nou
California State University, Long Beach

Dr. Mark Pfeifer
Texas A&M University, Corpus Christi

Dr. Bounlieng Phommasouvanh
Minnesota Department of Education

Dr. Kalyani Rai
University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee

Dr. Nancy J. Smith-Hefner
Boston University

Dr. Myluong Tran
San Diego State University

Dr. Linda Trinh Vo
University of California, Irvine

Dr. Zha Blong Xiong
University of Minnesota

Dr. Sue Needham
California State University, Dominguez Hills

Dr. Max Niedzwiecki
Daylight Consulting Group

Dr. Clara Park
California State University, Northridge

Dr. Loan T. Phan
University of New Hampshire

Dr. Karen Quintiliani
California State University, Long Beach

Dr. Fay Shin
California State University, Long Beach

Dr. Yer J. Thao
Portland State University

Dr. Khatharya Um
University of California, Berkeley

Dr. Zha Blong Xiong
University of Minnesota

Dr. Kou Yang
California State University, Stanislaus

Doctoral Student Editorial Review Board

Keo Chea-Young
University of Pennsylvania

Peter Tan Keo
Columbia University

Ravy Lao
University of California, Santa Barbara

Vanna Som
Harvard University

Layheng Ting
State University of New York, Albany

Tinou Tran
University of Houston, Texas

Annie BichLoan Duong
San Joaquin County Office of Education

Ha Lam
Arizona State University

Giang Pham
University of Minnesota

Rassamichanh Souryasack
University of California, Santa Barbara

Loan Tran
University of California, Santa Barbara

Phitsamay Sychitkokhong Uy
Harvard University

Yang Sao Xiong
University of California, Los Angeles