



2012

## Selected Poems

Krysada Panusith Phounsiri  
stratusfury@gmail.com

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

---

### Recommended Citation

Phounsiri, Krysada Panusith (2012) "Selected Poems," *Journal of Southeast Asian American Education and Advancement*. Vol. 7 : Iss. 1 , Article 10.

DOI: 10.7771/2153-8999.1052

Available at: <https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/jsaaea/vol7/iss1/10>

This document has been made available through Purdue e-Pubs, a service of the Purdue University Libraries. Please contact [epubs@purdue.edu](mailto: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](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/).



Volume 7 (2012)

# Journal of Southeast Asian American Education & Advancement

[www.JSAAEA.org](http://www.JSAAEA.org)

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

## Selected Poems *by* Krysada Panusith Phounsiri

### Afterlife

Poem for Oo Ma, Grandmother

I look  
for a cricket  
hope it appears  
in a corner  
of our home  
Mami used to  
hush us kids  
tell us to  
bow our heads three times  
"It's Oo Ma" she whispers

I search for  
her soul  
pray she follows us  
from rented home  
to rented home  
must have been  
her spirit  
that sparks the incense  
with the whiff  
of a flame  
ashes fall when we recite Sutras

I bend my legs  
weight on my knees  
don't care if I must crouch  
inside my closet  
or lay on the Event Horizon  
of a Black Hole  
I still look for a cricket  
that hops its way  
into my travels  
listen for a chirp  
like a lullaby  
Oo Ma used to sing



Readers are free to copy, display, and distribute this article, as long as the work is attributed to the author(s) and the **Journal of Southeast Asian American Education & Advancement**, it is distributed for non-commercial purposes only, and no alteration or transformation is made in the work. More details of this Creative Commons license are available at <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/>. All other uses must be approved by the author(s) or JSAAEA.

*Journal of Southeast Asian American Education & Advancement, Vol. 7 (2012)*

### **A Breath of Southeast in My Mother's Womb**

Southeast skies in Huay Xai Lao  
dive into my mother's lungs and  
into my bagpipes of life  
a Southeast Sky that the Sun  
sneaks light through to  
peek pass the thick fog  
witness the signs of my birth

Sometimes remnants of cinder  
warm the morning chills  
Mother breathes the smoke  
I take whatever air  
my Mother breathes  
and kick so she knows  
the cinder rouses me

She immerses herself in the Mekong River  
cleanses her skin letting each molecule  
glide 'round her body  
water drops that get lucky  
swim down her throat  
into her womb and  
streams with my bloody  
I taste the Mekong River for the  
first time

My mother's womb  
moist like the lakes  
that bathe her  
I swim in  
this sphere of birth  
so good  
I call myself selfish if  
I ever learn to  
swim like that  
again

Time comes for me to  
leave my mother's brook  
pass the nurturing canal  
and I meet the Southeast sky  
for the first time

born  
in the corner of  
a wooden house  
guarded by green groves and  
bamboo brush  
on the second floor  
in the corner of my mother's room

My jerks and kicks and squints  
worry my mother  
one breath and  
I cry  
the sacred air inside  
escapes  
time to inhale with  
two nostrils like  
caves on my face

Southeast air  
pouched in jewels  
leave their marks in my lungs  
with the tinge of smoke still fresh  
from the cinder  
I believe the  
weight of my spit still  
reminds me

Reminds me to  
inhale every spec of  
Huay Xai sky  
forever unite with  
the world I trap in my  
little bagpipes

In my mother's river  
In my mother's sky  
In my mother's home

For me

## About the Author



Krysada Panusith Phounsiri is a Laotian-American who was born in Houay Xai, Laos. He immigrated to the U.S. at age two where he lived in Southeast San Diego. He began writing poetry at age 11, but fell in love with poetry when he attended UC Berkeley. It was at Berkeley where he learned June Jordan's foundation in poetry and it was also where he found his ways to share his story. His writings carry the stories of his family, his culture, and his life for the purpose of expressing what he loves in a manner of art. He writes because he believes these stories need to be heard, they need to be read, and they need to be soaked in. In a world where many do not know about Laotian Americans and their history in America, Krysada wants to bring readers into his world of words in an attempt to uncover some truths and disperse stereotypes plaguing the umbrella Asian-American community. He normally goes by the name Binly, a nickname forever used by his family since childhood. He is a Physics/Astrophysics double major, Creative Writing Minor, and a Professional Dancer. He is currently residing in San Diego.



Volume 7 (2012)

# Journal of Southeast Asian American Education & Advancement

[www.JSAAEA.org](http://www.JSAAEA.org)

A peer-reviewed  
scholarly journal  
published by the  
National Association  
& 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 at Manoa*

**Dr. Phitsamay Sychitkokhong Uy**

*University of Massachusetts, Lowell*

## 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*

## Journal Manager

**Sovicheth Boun**

*University of Texas, San Antonio*

*Comments and questions for the editorial staff may be directed to [jsaaea@lists.sis.utsa.edu](mailto:jsaaea@lists.sis.utsa.edu)*

## Editorial Review Board

**Dr. Steve Arounsack**

*California State University, Stanislaus*

**Dr. Phala Chea**

*Lowell Public Schools*

**Dr. Loan Dao**

*Cancer Prevention Institute of California*

**Dr. Changming Duan**

*University of Missouri, Kansas City*

**Dr. Jeremy Hein**

*University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire*

**Dr. Samlong Inthaly**

*Minneapolis Public Schools*

**Dr. Kevin K. Kumashiro**

*University of Illinois, Chicago*

**Dr. Carl L. Bankston III**

*Tulane University*

**Dr. George Chigas**

*University of Massachusetts, Lowell*

**Dr. Hien Duc Do**

*San Jose State University*

**Dr. Sophal Ear**

*U.S. Naval Postgraduate School*

**Dr. Nancy H. Hornberger**

*University of Pennsylvania*

**Dr. Peter Nien-Chu Kiang**

*University of Massachusetts, Boston*

**Dr. Ha Lam**

*Arizona State University*

**Dr. Jonathan H. X. Lee***San Francisco State University***Dr. Sue Needham***California State University, Dominguez Hills***Dr. Bic Ngo***University of Minnesota***Dr. Leakhena Nou***California State University, Long Beach***Dr. Isabelle Thuy Pelaud***San Francisco State University***Dr. Giang Pham***University of Minnesota***Dr. Bounlieng Phommasouvanh***Minnesota Department of Education***Dr. Kalyani Rai***University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee***Dr. Soveacha Ros***Royal University of Phnom Penh***Dr. Nancy J. Smith-Hefner***Boston University***Dr. Christine Su***Ohio University***Dr. Loan Tran***University of California, Riverside***Dr. Tinou Tran***Alief Independent School District***Dr. Linda Trinh Vo***University of California, Irvine***Dr. Zha Blong Xiong***University of Minnesota***Dr. Stacey Lee***University of Wisconsin, Madison***KimOanh Nguyen-Lam***U.S. Department of Education***Dr. Max Niedzwiecki***Daylight Consulting Group***Dr. Clara Park***California State University, Northridge***Dr. Mark Pfeifer***SUNY Institute of Technology***Dr. Loan T. Phan***University of New Hampshire***Dr. Karen Quintiliani***California State University, Long Beach***Dr. Angela Reyes***Hunter College, The City University of New York***Dr. Fay Shin***California State University, Long Beach***Dr. Cathy J. Schlund-Vials***University of Connecticut, Storrs***Dr. Yer J. Thao***Portland State University***Dr. Myluong Tran***San Diego State University***Dr. Khatharya Um***University of California, Berkeley***Dr. Terrence G. Wiley***Center for Applied Linguistics***Dr. Kou Yang***California State University, Stanislaus*

### Doctoral Student Editorial Review Board

**Keo Chea-Young***University of Pennsylvania***Ketmani Kouanchao***California State University, Fullerton***Ravy Lao***University of California, Santa Barbara***Thien-Huong Ninh***University of Southern California***Vanna Som***Harvard University***Krissyvan Truong***Claremont Graduate University***Yang Sao Xiong***University of California, Los Angeles***Annie BichLoan Duong***San Joaquin County Office of Education***Peter Tan Keo***Columbia University***Monirith Ly***Texas State University-San Marcos***Malaphone Phommasa***University of California, Santa Barbara***Alisia Tran***University of Minnesota***Silvy Un***University of Minnesota***Yeng Yang***University of Texas, San Antonio*