



Nowhere to Arrive: Poems

Jenny Xie

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Nowhere to Arrive takes as its subjects the whiplash of travel, the shuttling between disparate places and climes, and an unremitting sense of dislocation. These poems court the tension between the familiar and the foreign, between the self as distinct and the self as illusory. They look plainly at the startling strangeness of varied landscapes and mindscapes, and interrogate a state of unrootedness—one thrown into relief by the speaker's years abroad in Southeast Asia.

At the chapbook's center are two long poems, titled "Phnom Penh Diptych: Wet Season" and "Phnom Penh Diptych: Dry Season," that examine the escapist narratives that draw tourists and expatriates to Cambodia, and the speaker's own privileged positioning.

On a formal level, the poems in *Nowhere to Arrive* make room for the unsaid and that which cannot be articulated. Here, we have a vocabulary of silence alongside stark imagistic juxtapositions, poems that celebrate compression and the force of paratactic constructions. Attentiveness and concentration emerge as virtues, as the speaker surveys the vast territory of the present with a wakeful gaze.

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