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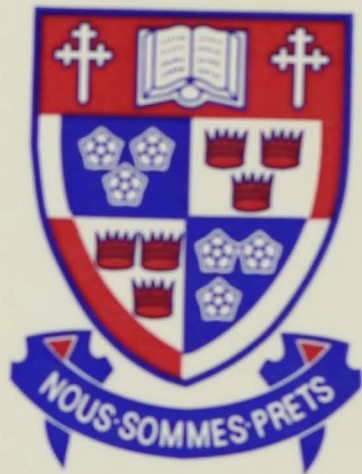
VOICES

An Anthology
of World Writing
in English

edited by
Victor J. Ramraj



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Concert of

VOICES

“To redeem the word from the superstition of the word is
to humanize it, to make it participate once more in a
living concert of voices . . .”

Geoffrey Hartman, *Beyond Formalism*

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Fred Wah

from *Breathin' my name with a sigh*

my father hurt-
ing at the table
sitting hurting
at suppertime
deep inside very
far down inside
because I can't stand the ginger
in the beef and greens
he cooked for us tonight
and years later tonight
that look on his face
appears now on mine
my children
my food
their food
my father
their father
me mine
the father
very far
very very far
inside

Biographical Notes

ACHEBE, Chinua (b. 1930) Born in Ogidi, Nigeria, he studied in Ibadan and London. His novels include *Things Fall Apart* (1958), *A Man of the People* (1966), and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1986). He has published stories, poetry, and essays, and has held teaching positions in Nigeria and the United States. He has been awarded honorary degrees in Canada, the USA, and the UK.

AIDOO, (Christina) Ama Ata (b. 1942) Born in Ghana, she was educated there and at Stanford University and now lives in the USA. A poet, playwright, and novelist, she has written the novel *Our Sister Killjoy* (1977), the play *Anowa* (1970), and several short stories.

ALI, Agha Shahid (b. 1949) Originally from Kashmir, he was educated in India and the USA. He currently lives in the USA, where he has taught at several universities and colleges. His publications include *The Half-Inch Himalayas* (1987) and *A Nostalgist's Map of America* (1990).

ANAND, Mulk Raj (b. 1905) Born in Peshawar, India (now in Pakistan), he was educated in Punjab and in London. He earned his PhD in Philosophy in 1929. Actively involved in India's struggle for independence, he served later as cultural advisor to the government. *Untouchable* (1935) was the first of many novels, stories, essays, and children's books.

ARASANAYAGAM, Jean (b. 1940) Born in Sri Lanka into a Dutch Burgher family, she was educated there and in Scotland. She has published six volumes of poetry, including *Out of our Prisons We Emerge* (1987) and *Red Water Flows Clear* (1991), a collection of short stories, and a novel. She lectures at a teachers' college in Sri Lanka.

BEGAMUDRE, Ven (b. 1956) Born in South India, he moved to Canada when he was six years old. He studied in the USA, Paris, and Ottawa. His publications include a collection of short stories, *A Planet of Eccentrics* (1990), and a novel, *Van de Graff Days* (1993).

BENNETT, Louise (b. 1919) Born in Jamaica, she originally wrote poems in Standard English but abandoned that for Jamaican creole. She went to England on a drama scholarship and had a regular programme on the BBC. Now based

in Jamaica, she has written several volumes of poetry including *Jamaica Labrish* (1966), and has retold Jamaican folk tales in several published collections.

BISSOONDATH, Neil (b. 1955) Born and educated in Trinidad, he came to Canada in 1973 to attend York University. His publications include *Digging Up the Mountains* (a collection of stories, 1986), *A Casual Brutality* (a novel, 1988), and *Selling Illusions: The Cult of Multiculturalism in Canada* (1994).

BOSTOCK, Gerry (b. 1942) Born in New South Wales, Australia, he became involved in street theatre and later in the political struggles for Aboriginal rights. He has written poetry, including *Black Man Coming* (1980), and several plays. He has done work for television. His documentary film *Lousy Little Sixpence* was produced in 1981.

BRAND, Dionne (b. 1953) Born in Trinidad, she immigrated to Canada in 1970. She is involved in the black community and in the educational system in Toronto. She has written *Sans Souci and Other Stories* (1988) and several volumes of poetry, including *Chronicles of the Hostile Sun* (1984) and *No Language is Neutral* (1990).

BRATHWAITE, Edward Kamau (b. 1930) Born in Barbados, he was educated at Harrison College, Barbados, and Cambridge University. His many volumes of poems include *The Arrivants: A New World Trilogy* (1973), *Masks* (1968), and *Sun Poem* (1982). He has written several studies on Caribbean social and cultural history and has lectured in History at the University of the West Indies.

BRUTUS, Dennis (b. 1924) Born in Zimbabwe, he was educated in South Africa, where he studied English and Law. Because of opposition to apartheid, he was banned from South Africa. He currently lives and writes in the USA. His poetry collection *Letters to Martha* (1968) tells of his experiences of violence and degradation in prison.

BUHKWUJJENENE (b. c.1815-1900) He was the Ojibway chief who, in 1878, told the story of Nanaboozhoo creating the world to a group of Englishmen.

CHEN, Willi (b. 1934) Born In Trinidad, he is a short-story writer, poet, dramatist, painter, and sculptor. Some of his stories are collected in *King of the Carnival and Other Stories* (1988).

CLARKE, Austin (b. 1934) Born and educated in Barbados, he came to Canada in 1955 to study economics. He has published several novels, including *Survivors of the Crossing* (1964), *The Meeting Point* (1967), and *Growing Up Stupid Under the Union Jack* (1980) and several collections of short stories, including *Nine Men Who Laughed* (1986) and *In This City* (1992).

COWASJEE, Saros (b. 1931) Born in India, he studied at Agra University and the University of Leeds and now teaches English at the University of Regina. He has written two novels, including *Goodbye to Elsa* (1974), two collections of stories, and several essays and commentaries, and has edited several volumes of Indian stories.

CRUSZ, Rienzi (b. 1925) Born in Sri Lanka of Portuguese ancestry, he was educated at St. Joseph's College in Colombo and later taught there. In 1951, he studied library science in London. He immigrated to Canada in 1965 and has worked as a librarian. His volumes of poetry include *Flesh and Thorn* (1974) and *A Time for Loving* (1986).

D'AGUIAR, Fred (b. 1960) Born in London, he grew up in Guyana, but returned to England, where he now resides. A poet and dramatist, his volumes of poems include *Mama Dot* (1985) and *Airy Hall* (1989).

DABYDEEN, Cyril (b. 1945) Born in Guyana, he came to Canada in 1970 and attended Queen's University. He has published several volumes of poetry, including *Distances* (1977) and *Coastland* (1989), two volumes of short stories, and two novellas.

DABYDEEN, David (b. 1955) Born in Berbice, Guyana, he immigrated to England when he was thirteen years old. He attended the universities of Cambridge and London. His publications include a scholarly work, *Hogarth's Blacks* ((1987), several volumes of poetry, including *Slave Song* (1984), and a novel, *The Intended* (1991).

DAS, Kamala (b. 1934) Born and educated in India, she has written several volumes of poetry, including *The Descendants* (1967), short stories, and an autobiography, *My Story* (1975).

DAS, Manoj (b. 1934) Born in Orissa, India, he has written several volumes of short stories, fables, and fantasies, including *The Vengeance and Other Stories* (1980).

DAVIS, Jack (b. 1917) Born in Australia, he has been active as a poet, dramatist, and critic since the 1960s. He was the editor of the Aboriginal magazine *Identity*. His poetry collections include *The First-Born and Other Poems* (1970).

DESAI, Anita (b. 1937) Born in India to a German mother and Bengali father, she has written several novels, including *Fire on the Mountain* (1977) and *Baumgartner's Bombay* (1988), children's books, and a volume of short stories, *Games at Twilight* (1978). She currently teaches in the USA and Delhi.

DE SOUZA, Eunice (b. 1940) Born in Poona, India, she was educated in the

USA and in Bombay, where she is now Lecturer in English. She has written three volumes of poetry, including *Ways of Belonging* (1990), and children's books.

EZEKIEL, Nissim (b. 1924) Born in Bombay, India, of Jewish parents, he was educated in Bombay and London. He worked as a journalist, broadcaster, and teacher. He has written several volumes of poetry, including *The Unfinished Man* (1960), plays, reviews, and art criticism.

GOODISON, Lorna (b. 1947) Born in Jamaica, she attended the University of Iowa and Radcliffe College. An artist and poet, she has written several volumes of poetry, including *I Am Becoming My Mother* (1986) and *Heartease* (1988), and a collection of short stories, *Baby Mother and the King of Swords* (1990).

GORDIMER, Nadine (b. 1923) Born in Springs, near Johannesburg, she attended the University of Witwatersrand. She published her first collection of stories, *Face to Face*, in 1949. Since then she has published many other volumes of stories and such novels as *The Conservationist* (1974) and *My Son's Story* (1990). She was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1991.

HAGEDORN, Jessica (b. 1949) Born and raised in the Philippines, she now lives in the USA. She has performed in the theatre and has published numerous poems, reviews, essays, and fiction, including two volumes of poetry and a novel, *Dogeaters* (1990).

HARRIS, Claire (b. 1937) Born in Trinidad, she was educated in Trinidad, Ireland, Jamaica, and Lagos. She now lives in Calgary. She has written many volumes of poetry, including *Fables from the Women's Quarters* (1984) and *The Conception of Winter* (1988).

HARRIS, Wilson (b. 1921) Born and educated in Guyana, he immigrated in 1959 to England. Among his novels are *Palace of the Peacock* (1960), *Ascent to Omai* (1970), and *Carnival* (1985). He has written poetry and essays, including *The Womb of Space: The Cross-Cultural Imagination* (1983). He has lectured widely at universities around the world.

HEAD, Bessie (1937-86) Born in South Africa of a Scottish mother and black father, she became a teacher and later a journalist. She left South Africa in 1964 and spent the rest of her life in Botswana. She wrote four novels, including *Maru* (1971) and *A Question of Power* (1974), and two short-story collections.

HULME, Keri (b. 1947) Born in New Zealand, she lives in Okarito on the West Coast. She is of Maori (Kai Tahu) and Pakeha ancestry. She has written poetry and fiction. Her novel *the bone people* (1984) won the Pegasus Prize for Maori literature and the 1985 Booker Prize.

IHIMAERA, Witi (b. 1944) Born in New Zealand of Maori and Scottish ancestry, he has published several novels and stories, including *Tangi* (1973), *The Whale Rider* (1987), and *Dear Miss Mansfield* (1989). He has written an opera, *Waituhi: The Life of the Village* (1985), and a cultural history, *Maori* (1975).

ITO, Sally (b. 1965) Born in Alberta, Canada, of Japanese ancestry ("my mother having come from Japan and my father being a third generation Japanese Canadian"), she studied in Japan and at the University of British Columbia. Her poems have appeared in Canadian magazines.

ITWARU, Arnold (b. 1942) Born in Guyana, he immigrated to Canada in 1969. He has written three collections of poetry, including *Entombed Survivals* (1987), a novel, *Shanti* (1988), and three non-fiction works, the most recent being *The Invention of Canada: Literary Texts and the Immigrant Imagination* (1990).

JAIN, Sunita (b. 1941) Born in India, she has studied in the USA and India. She writes in both Hindi and English and has published two volumes of stories, including *Eunuch of Time and Other Stories* (1982).

JHABVALA, Ruth Praver (b. 1927) Born in Germany to a Polish/Jewish family, she immigrated to Britain in 1939. Educated in England, she lived in India for 25 years after her marriage. Her novels include *The Householder* (1960) and *Heat and Dust* (1975). She has written several collections of short stories and screenplays. She has been living in the USA since 1976.

KINCAID, Jamaica (b. 1949) Born in Antigua, she now lives and writes in the USA. Her fiction includes *At the Bottom of the River* (short stories, 1984) and *Annie John* (novel, 1985). She has written many critical essays.

KING, Thomas (b. 1943) Born in Canada of a Cherokee father and a Greek-German mother, he was Chair of Native American studies at the University of Minnesota. He also teaches at the University of Guelph, Canada. His publications include *Green Grass, Running Water* (novel, 1993), a number of short stories, poems, and a children's book.

KOGAWA, Joy (b. 1935) Born in Vancouver, Canada, of Japanese ancestry, she grew up in Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia. She and her family were interned during the Second World War. Her volumes of poetry include *A Choice of Dreams* (1974). She has written a novel, *Obasan* (1981), based on her experiences during the war.

LAM, Dominic Man-Kit Raised in Hong Kong, he attended the University of British Columbia, and now divides his time between Hong Kong and Texas; he is a scientist as well as an internationally recognised artist.

LIM, Shirley Geok-Lin (b. 1943) Born in Malaysia, she immigrated to the USA and is a poet, critic, and academic. Her poetry collections include *Crossing the Peninsula*, which won the 1980 Commonwealth Poetry Prize. She is

co-editor of *The Forbidden Stitch: An Asian American Women's Anthology* (1989).

MAHAPATRA, Jayanta (b. 1928) Born and educated in Calcutta, India, he taught Physics for many years in Orissa. He has written thirteen volumes of poetry, including *The False Start* (1980), short stories and essays and has won several awards for his poetry.

MARACLE, Lee (b. 1950) Born in Canada, she is a Native poet, who is immersed in the social and cultural life of her people. She was part-time writer in residence at the International School for Native People in British Columbia. She now lives in Toronto. Among her books of fiction is *Sojourner's Truth and Other Stories* (1990) and *Ravensong* (1993).

MARECHERA, Dambudzo (1952-87) Born in Zimbabwe, he was educated at the University of Zimbabwe and Oxford University. He travelled extensively in Europe and Africa. He was a controversial but acclaimed writer whose publications include *The House of Hunger* (novel, 1978) and *Cemetery of Mind* (poetry, 1992).

MELVILLE, Pauline Born in Guyana, she immigrated to London, working there on stage and in film. Her poems have been published in various anthologies. *Shape-shifter* (1990) is her first collection of short stories.

MISHRA, Sudesh Born in Suva, Fiji, he received his doctorate from the Flinders University of South Australia. He has published three volumes of poetry, including *Memoirs of a Reluctant Traveller* (1994), and has recently made his debut as a playwright and actor. He is working on a novel set in Fiji.

MISTRY, Rohinton (b. 1952) Born in Bombay, India, he came to Canada in 1975. He studied at the University of Bombay and the University of Toronto. His publications include *Tales from Firozsha Baag* (stories, 1987) and *Such a Long Journey* (novel, 1991).

MO, Timothy (b. 1950) Born in Hong Kong to English and Cantonese parents, he has spent much of his life in the UK. His works include the novels *Sour Sweet* (1982) and *An Insular Possession* (1986).

MORI, Toshio (b. 1910) Born in California, of Japanese ancestry, he has written several volumes of fiction, including *Woman from Hiroshima* (novel, 1979) and *Yokohama, California* (stories, 1949).

MOLLEL, Tololwa Marti Born in Tanzania, he immigrated to Canada and has been teaching at the University of Alberta. His stories, many written for children, have been broadcast on the BBC, and have been published in such periodicals as *Kunapipi* and the *Greenfield Review*.

MORRIS, Mervyn (b. 1937) Born in Jamaica, he was educated there and at Oxford University on a Rhodes Scholarship. He has published several collections of poetry, including *The Pond* (1973), has edited a number of anthologies, and is a journalist and theatre critic. He teaches at the University of the West Indies in Jamaica.

MPHAHLELE, Es'kia (b. 1919) Born in Pretoria, South Africa, he has taught at universities in the USA and in South Africa, where he currently lives. His publications include *The Wanderers* (novel, 1971), *Man Must Live* (stories, 1946), and *The African Image* (essays, 1962, rev. 1974).

MUKHERJEE, Bharati (b. 1940) Born and educated in Calcutta, India, she attended universities in India and the USA. She spent some years in Canada before returning to the USA in 1981. Her publications include *Wife* (novel, 1975), *Darkness* (stories, 1985), and *The Sorrow and the Terror: The Haunting Legacy of the Air India Tragedy* (1987), with Clark Blaise.

NAIPAUL, V. S. (b. 1932) Born in Trinidad and educated at Queen's Royal College, Trinidad, he left for Oxford University in 1950, and has lived in England since then. His novels include *The Mystic Masseur* (1957), *A House for Mr Biswas* (1961), *The Enigma of Arrival* (1987), and *A Way in the World* (1994). He has published several collections of essays and travel books, including *Among the Believers* (1981) and *India: A Million Mutinies Now* (1990).

NANDAN, Satendra (b. 1939) Born in Fiji, he was educated there in UK and Australia. He moved to Australia after the Fijian coups in 1987. He has published several volumes of poems, including *Voices in the River* (1985), and a novel *The Wounded Sea* (1991). His autobiography, *Relics of a Rainbow: A Fijian Story*, is due in 1995.

NARAYAN, R. K. (b. 1906) Born in Madras, India, he has spent most of his life in Mysore. He has published fourteen novels including *Swami and Friends* (1935) and *The World of Nagaraj* (1990), and numerous collections of stories, essays, and memoirs. He has travelled and lectured in the USA, and has received India's highest literary award, the Padma Bhushan award.

NAROGIN, Mudrooroo / Colin Johnson (b. 1938) Born in Narogin, Western Australia, he changed his name to reaffirm his tribal identity. He writes poetry, fiction, and literary criticism. His publications include *Wild Cat Falling* (novel, 1965) and *The Song Circle of Jacky and Selected Poems* (1986). He has taught Aboriginal Literature at Murdoch University and at the University of Queensland.

NDEBELE, Njabulo S. (b. 1948) Born in Johannesburg, South Africa, he was educated there, at Cambridge University, and the University of Denver. His

publications include *Fools and Other Stories* (1983) and *South African Literature and Culture* (1994).

NGITJI, Ngitji / Mona Tur Born in South Australia, she writes poetry and prose, and is a teacher and translator of Aboriginal languages. She has written several critical articles on Aboriginal literature in *Identity*.

NGUGI WA THIONG'O (b. 1938) Born in Kenya, he was educated at universities in Uganda and Britain. His novels include *A Grain of Wheat* (1967) and *Petals of Blood* (1977). He has written plays and cultural and political commentaries, including *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* (1986).

NOONUCCAL, Oodgeroo / Kath Walker (1920-93) Born in Australia, she was a member of the Noonuccal tribe and was an activist for her people. She published several poetry volumes, including *We Are Going* (1964), children's stories, and such traditional tales as *Stradbroke Dreamtime* (1972).

OKARA, Gabriel (b. 1921) Born and educated in Nigeria, he worked as a schoolteacher, bookbinder, and businessman until 1953, when his poem "Call of the River Nun" won a poetry award. His publications include *The Fisherman's Invocation* (poetry, 1978) and *The Voice* (novel, 1964).

ONDAATJE, Michael (b. 1943) Born in Sri Lanka of mixed Tamil, Sinhalese, and Dutch ancestry, he immigrated to Canada in 1962. His many volumes of poetry and prose include *Coming Through Slaughter* (1976), *There's a Trick with a Knife I'm Learning to Do* (1979), *Running in the Family* (1982), and *The English Patient* (1992), for which he won the Booker Prize. He is also a filmmaker and has written a critical study on Leonard Cohen (1970).

PERSAUD, Sasenarine Born in Guyana, he now lives in Canada. A poet, novelist, and critic, his publications include *The Ghost of Bellow's Man* (novel, 1992) and *Demerara Telepathy* (1988).

PHILIP, M. Nourbese (b. 1947) Born in Trinidad (Tobago), she moved to Canada in 1968. A lawyer and activist against racism, she has published several volumes of poetry, including *She Tries Her Tongue: Her Silence Softly Breaks* (1989) and *Looking for Livingstone: An Odyssey of Silence* (1991).

RHYS, Jean (1890-1979) Born in Dominica to a Welsh father and Creole mother, she spent the first seventeen years of her life there. She left for Britain and Paris where she spent the rest of her life. She wrote five novels, including *Voyage in the Dark* (1934) and *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966), several short-story collections, and an autobiography.

RUSHDIE, Salman (b. 1947) Born in Bombay, India, Rushdie was educated

at Rugby and Cambridge, England, graduating with a degree in History. His novels include *Grimus* (1975), *Midnight's Children* (1981), and the controversial *The Satanic Verses* (1988), which led to death threats against him. He has published also *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism* (1991).

SELVON, Sam (1923-94) Born in Trinidad, the son of an East Indian father and half-Scottish mother, he immigrated to England in 1954 and moved to Calgary in 1978. He wrote ten novels, including *An Island Is a World* (1955), *The Lonely Londoners* (1956), and *Moses Migrating* (1983), numerous short stories, essays, screenplays, and plays for radio and television.

SENIOR, Olive (b. 1941) Born in Jamaica, she was educated there, in Canada, and in Britain. An editor and journalist, her publications include *Talking of Trees* (poems, 1985), *Summer Lightning* (stories, 1986), and *The Arrival of the Snake Woman* (stories, 1989).

SETH, Vikram (b. 1952) Born in Calcutta, India, he left India at the age of eleven to study in England. A graduate of Oxford and of Stanford, his publications include *Mappings* (poetry, 1982), *From Heaven Lake: Travels Through Sinkiang and Tibet* (1983), *The Golden Gate* (a novel in verse, 1986), and *A Suitable Boy* (novel, 1993).

SHERLOCK, Philip (b. 1902) Born in Jamaica, he became Vice-Chancellor of the University of the West Indies. He is the author and editor of more than fifteen volumes of poetry, history, and folk tales, including *Anansi the Spider Man* (1954).

SILKO, Leslie Marmon (b. 1948) Born in New Mexico, she is of mixed ancestry, part Laguna, part Mexican, and part white. She is the author of the novel *Ceremony* (1977), and several collections of stories, including *Laguna Woman* (1974). *Storyteller* (1981) is a selection of her poems and stories.

SOYINKA, Wole (b. 1934) Born in Nigeria and educated at universities in Ibadan and Leeds, he has published several novels and volumes of essays, plays, and poetry, including *A Dance of the Forests* (play, 1963), *The Interpreters* (novel, 1965), *Poems from Prison* (1969), *The Man Died: Prison Notes of Wole Soyinka* (1972), and *Mandela's Earth and Other Poems* (1988). He was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1986.

SUBRAMANI (b. 1943) Born in Fiji, he has studied in Suva, New Zealand, and Canada. His publications include *The Fantasy Eaters* (1988) a collection of stories and a number of critical essays. He now teaches at the University of the South Pacific in Suva.

TALLMOUNTAIN, Mary / Mary Randle (1918-94) Born in Alaska, the daughter of a Koyukon-Athabaskan Indian mother and Scottish-Irish father,

she published several collections of poems and short stories, including *Nine Poems* (1979), *There Is No Word For Goodbye* (1981), and *Light on the Tent Wall* (1990).

THUMBOO, Edwin (b. 1933) Born in Singapore to a Tamil father and a Chinese mother, he now lectures at the University of Singapore. He has published six volumes of poetry, including *Gods Can Die* (1977) and *Ulysses by the Merlion* (1979).

VASSANJI, M. G. (b. 1950) Born in Kenya, he grew up in Tanzania but moved to London and later to the USA, where he obtained a doctorate in Physics. His publications include *The Gunny Sack* (novel, 1989) and *Uhuru Street* (stories, 1992). He currently lives in Toronto.

VUKI, Alafina Born in Suva, Fiji, she is a graduate of the University of the South Pacific and has taught at Dudley High School.

WAH, Fred (b. 1939) Born in Saskatchewan, Canada, he has written several collections of poetry, including *Selected Poems* (1980), *Breathin' My Name with a Sigh* (1981), and *Waiting for Saskatchewan* (1986), which won the Governor General's Award for Poetry, and *Rooftops* (1988). He teaches at the University of Calgary.

WALCOTT, Derek (b. 1930) Born in St. Lucia, he has lived in Trinidad and the USA. He currently teaches at Boston University. His volumes of poems include *25 Poems* (1948), *In a Green Night: Poems 1948-1960* (1962), *Midsummer* (1984), and *Omeros* (1989). He has written several plays, including *Henri Christophe* (1950) and *Dream on Monkey Mountain* (1970). He received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1992.

WENDT, Albert (b. 1939) Born in Western Samoa, he is of Samoan and German ancestry. He has taught at the University of the South Pacific in Fiji and at the University of Auckland. His novels include *Pouliuli* (1976) and *Leaves of the Banyan Tree* (1979). He has published several collections of stories and poems.

WONG, May Born in Singapore, she has published three volumes of poetry: *A Bad Girl's Book of Animals* (1969), *Reports* (1972), and *Superstitions* (1978).

YAP, Arthur (b. 1943) Born in Singapore, he has written four collections of poetry, including *Commonplace* (1977) and *Man Snake Apple and Other Poems* (1986).