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FOREWORD

Contextual Essence-striving Transcending Time & Space

Lai Fong Wong's book is a contribution to history, literature and the human spirit; for, while the book speaks of current happenings, it relates to all time and all matter. Resistance and release exist at once, in this new world, defined by poems and illustrations that animate subjects beautifully and powerfully. How does one write of "essence" and "striving" both? Only the Zen experience can make words work these mysteries. The poet uses compelling mathematical theories in the poem's composition and at the same time she is a story teller, revealing ideals shattered within the patience of hope. How all this is managed comes only from a writer who has paved her own road, who has navigated the world of language, who is willing to look at the story of suffering; and who has the multidimensional gifts to balance all together. Modernism and lyricism bond here to create a bright light on a dark moment, and thus to transcend time with art, and to replace breakage with passion and focus, it is transformational, what this book beholds. This is a rare voice by one who has mastered the craft to create a world larger than we knew before.

— *Grace Cavalieri*

Maryland Poet Laureate

Shatter of Protest-Love-Meditation

In this astounding book of poems Lai Fong Wong brings language structures to emotions which allow the reader to experience the shatter of protest, love and even the act of meditation. It reveals the intimate, the separate and the desperate desire for humanity to be whole. She renders emotion in various geographies and mathematic equations that create a stir in the mind and a longing in the heart to reshape what has been shattered. The mixed-and-matched parallels of sensation are extraordinarily rendered as in the lines, when a tropical cyclone is centered/ a strong wind force blowing near/upgradable signals no.3,5,8, /- her bitter lover. This collection is a whirlwind of rhyme and rhythm shaped for the taking in. Lai Fong's poems move in sequences of time and lucky for us, it is on time for our struggling world!

— *Sheila Carter-Jones, Ph.D.*

*Author of Three Birds Deep/Former Professor of Education,
Chatham University*

2012 Winner of the Naomi Long Madgett Book Award

Splintered Syntax & Mixed Diction

This collection of poems by Lai Fong Wong unite shattering loss and grief and a deep and hopeful resilience in the face of tragedy both natural and man-made. The poems employ a splintered syntax and mixed diction in lines informed by both ancient and contemporary idioms. In language and image, the opening section of this collection responds to the current, ongoing protest movement in Hong Kong. These poems embody the chaotic rush of humanity toward the ideal as it clashes with the brutal, blunt force of suppression. [FORCEFUL 6] “The Taoist...” ends with these lines: “Leaderless/Timeless time/No big command/ Just favorite Iphone/Non-programmatic platform/ It seems nothing to comply with/ But things take the course of their natural own.”

There are poems of love, too: the love of a daughter for her dying mother to whom she gives a last drink of the juice of watermelon, of the bonds of friendship and the erotic touch of lovers. The pages in this collection are sprinkled with photographic art that helps this reader to more carefully ponder these deeply felt poems.”

— *Ellen Wise*

Mid-Atlantic Arts Foundation Creative Fellow

Board Member for Perugia Press

PREFACE

Porous Poetry – Poetic Duo

Under my poetry anthology, I hereby share an unlimited awareness of movement/flow, for sensing along with the visible world a “stream of consciousness”, instead of giving an expression in the static forms of words or symbols. I attempt to seek not only capturing moment in time but rather to reflecting the continual time in dual or multiple context that reconnect imagery of the past and present, here and there, objective and subjective, inner and outer as well as life and death. It targets for a creative poetic landscape with an un-bounded, holistic and authentic perimeter.

The philosophy of Henri Bergson for poetry, under which I have been strongly inspired, is to redefine the modern conceptions of time and space, causality and intuition.

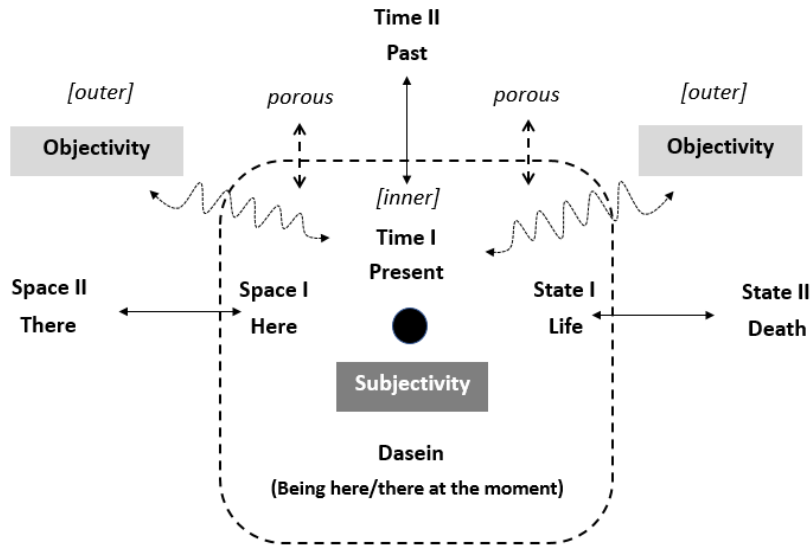
I also believe that both Bergson’s “Fluid Experience” and Carl Jung’s “Synchronicity” manifests that the state of mind and moving events in the outside world are being simultaneously coincided and moving with what has been meaningfully correlated.

In the notion of “Porous Poetry”, I explore to link it to a stylistic sensibility of contemporary poetry landscape which is laid out with no rigid boundaries. Poetic porosity is hereby referred to what is permeable and capable for being penetrated. My poems turn towards beyond-the-visible phenomenon and draws words and images down to a fluid inner mind with outside influences. I prefer to touch moments of an imminence well above one single simple current phenomenon, towards an invisible level of metaphysical flexibility, and bombard at the climax of an unsung passion that has long been hidden layer upon layer.

In summary, poetry for me has an unreserved passionate capacity to gild multi layers upon simultaneous subjectivity/objectivity and second sight in context. The form of my porous poems consists of twelve patterns: (1) present and temporal moment, (2) simplicity of words-cape, (3) endlessness of space , (4) fluid nature of time, (5) multiple arena and perspectives, (6) dynamic rather than static creative processing, (7) unfolded structure, (8) de-centered but contingent on subjectivity and inter-subjectivity, (9) the blurring boundaries, (10) instantaneity-immediacy, (11) steamy and watery experiences, (12) Zen of life.

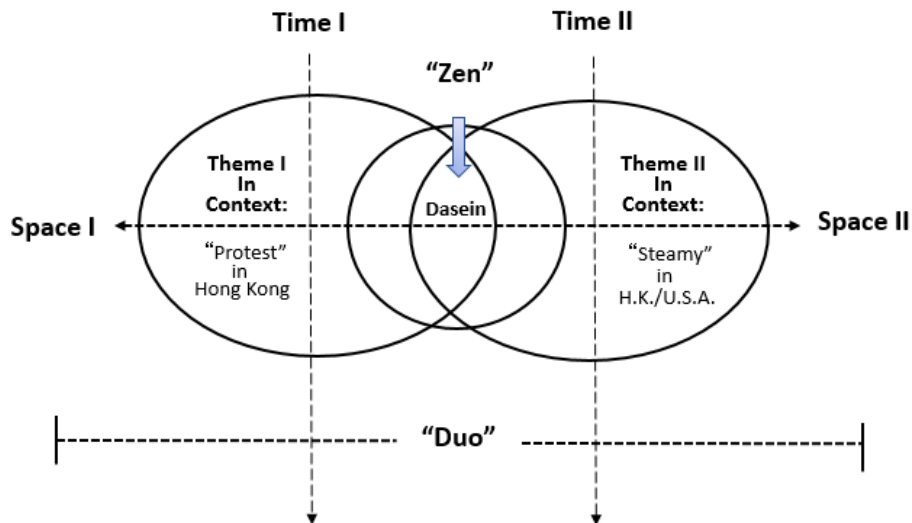
MY POROUS POETRY: CONCEPT MAP I

(Developed from Bergson's Fluid Experience)



POROUS POETRY: CONCEPT MAP II

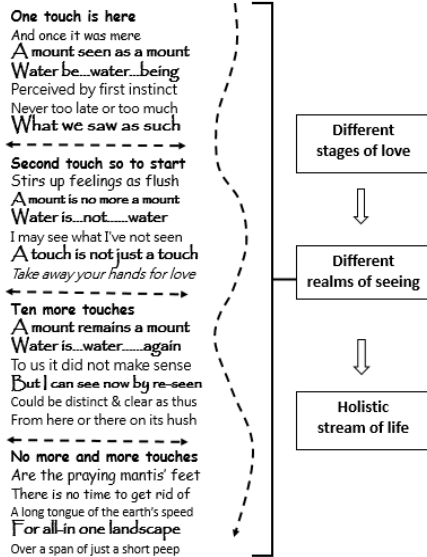
(Developed from Jung's Synchronicity-Immediacy)



POROUS POETRY: VARIETIES

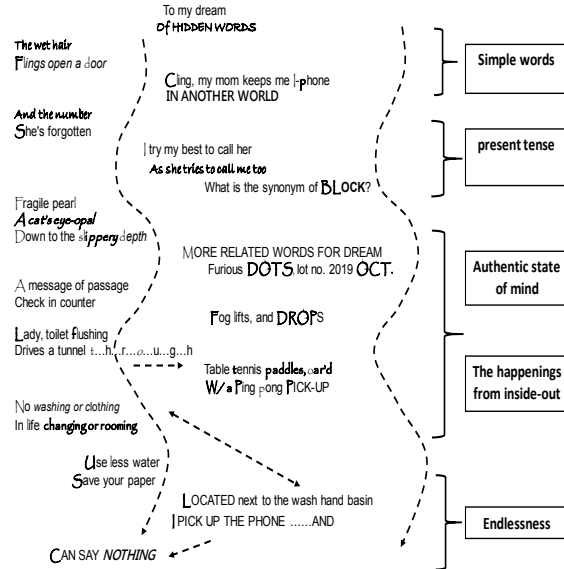
VERTICAL POROSITY

[STEAMY 23: More Than One Touch]



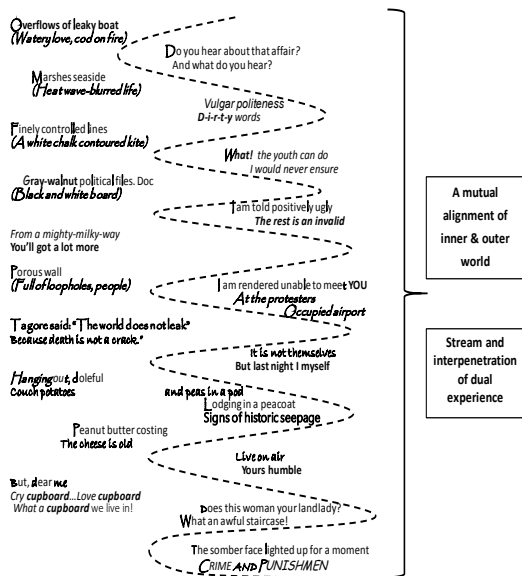
PARALLEL CYNCHRONICITIES

[POROUS 5: Between Life and Death]



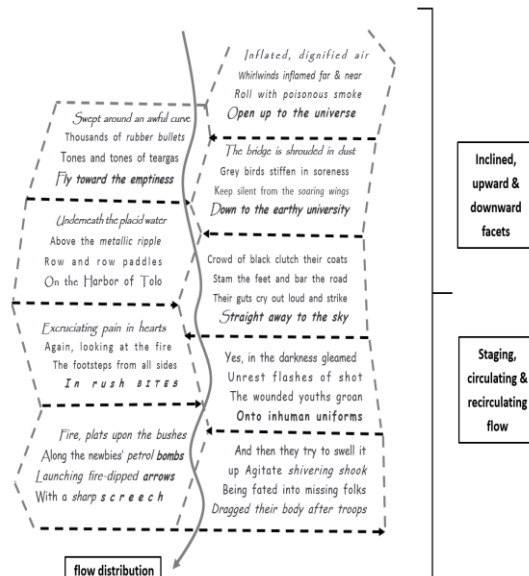
ZIGZAG PENETRATION

[POROUS 6: Between Love and Brutality]



FLOW CONFIGURATION

[POROUS 11: A Rape of Campus Soil]



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To my grand-mother and parents who are now resting in peace in Heaven, I can barely find the words to thank for all the wisdom, love and support that you've treasured to me.

I am wholeheartedly indebted to Maryland Poet Laureate Grace Cavalieri of Annapolis, Dr. Sheila Carter-Jones of Pittsburgh, and Ms. Ellen Wise of Eastern Shore in Maryland, for their invaluable encouragement and esteemed advice that have enabled my first book successfully published in Washington.

I also express my very special thanks to Dr. Anna Lawton and to staff of the New Academia Publishing for warmly helping me make this book available to the public beautifully.

I extend my deepest gratitude to Prof. Chan Wing Chi, from whom I have been navigated to connect with the Washingtonian poetry circle that has fascinated my creative writing process along the footpath with the global cultural arts communities.

For my siblings, teachers, mentors, colleagues, students, Mr. F.H. Chan for his photography, and those who have kind-heartedly assisted my life on cultural arts and poetry, in any ways and any stages, I am extremely grateful.

— *Lai-Fong Wong, Ph.D.*

*Poet/Artist/Former Faculty for Creative Arts, The Education University of Hong Kong
Art Curator, The Airport Authority Hong Kong
Adjunct faculty member of Educational Psychology Department, the Chinese University of Hong Kong*

PROLOGUE

Today's Hong Kong in Water & Fire

Hong Kong turns towards...
an abysmal crisis
A citywide FIRE

Burning of streets and colleges
Tear gas intoxicates our SUN

Extricated fire to water
for a sense in ONE

Water is weak
but can extinguish a flame
Just as fire is strong
yet boils water to **STEAMY** NONE

FIRE complements WATER
Mutually neutralized & reinforced

When the world becoming extreme
It will bounce back in opposite **FORCE**

Inspiring us to be ZEN:

Sex or **KIN**
nourishes Yang and Yin
The **DUO** interacts
water-fire, weak-strong
dark-bright, negative-positive

POROSITY of liquidity
As such the aura of fluidity
Tend to recode the brushstrokes
O f t h e c i t y

INTRODUCTION

ZEN ON FIRE:

Forceful Protest

“ZEN”(A Japanese term originated from the Chinese Buddhism “Chen” 禪) is implied to a sensual state of mind under a meditative phenomenon. During the process of Zen practice, practitioners, at the higher levels, are expected to imagine sitting in the middle of the fire and keeping calm. Today, Hong Kong is in a turmoil that thoroughly displays an art of Zen on fire philosophically for its constant protesting activities since 2019.

Protesters might go through the “fire” for re-identifying themselves, whereas all personal senses are to be refining over the fire of love and hostility, passion and confusion, leading lives to enlighten for a new page of complete democratization on their homeland. Such kind of devotion unexpectedly motivates a massive movement amid young people for turning their original weak habits into waves of diverse and activating strength, the calm be shock, peaceable be forceable, and vice versa. When lighting a fire on positive purpose, there is a paradoxical martyr's "burning into ash" as an end aesthetically.

Hong Kong's temporal anti-extradition movement has chronically been rooted on a dramatic shift of civilian identity and sense of belonging since the United Kingdom handed over its 100-year-ruling colony back to Socialist China in 1997. Metaphorically, it generates symbiotic effects beyond a single regional defiance on itself and gradually extends to a totally unexpected universal context.



KIN ON FIRE:

Steamy Love

“Kin” usually refers to an intimacy involving romantic love, sexual affection and passionate attachment of close family members. However, this traditional normativity conventionally has been reactivating in connecting into a flow of network over the human activities of cultural globalization.

Under traditional Chinese Taoism views, it has pragmatically been placing sexuality purely for the purpose of strengthening the function of life-enhancing energy. Meanwhile current America's Zen meditation will usually let the practitioner have the freedom for choosing a fully enjoyable sensuality in his/her secular life, including a steamy love. Being committed to the mindfulness and unthinkingness, the state of steamy love on fire, under my poetry, is actually landscaped as a passage of an immortal Taoism-Zen experience.

Love can always transform the weak into the strong, and similarly soft water may be considered as a vital tool to “understand” the Taoism Yin-Yang integration perception. Herman Melville (1819 –1891), a novelist and poet of the American Renaissance period, certainly believes that “meditation and water are wedded forever.” Love and sex, simultaneously being in water and be water, are to be tender, thirsty and free from people’s muse. “Be water” is also a motto quoted by Chinese American martial arts actor Bruce Lee (1940-1973), who was a tough movie fighter, whereas the Hong Kong protesters use the slogan “Be water” as a principle for adapting the flexibility and mobility to adjust any different forms of resistance action under any unexpected situations during their civil movement. Subsequently young people may even envision the Year 2019 street protest as a page of “watery-sexy” life, artistically and tangibly.



DUO ON FIRE:

Porous Life

My Duo Poetry may be landscaped as the contrast and balance over a set of two mirrors that reflects a moment of sights, which articulates the motion of two complements: Illusory Yin and Realistic Yang. This Yin-Yang Duo represents a dynamic, holistic, dialectical and porous integration that addresses a joint-venture unity along with a liberation from the suffering of anyone/anything in "coupling".

The paddle puzzle is an old classic game that symbolically means the existence for two individuals. My parents, as a couple, were more than a paddle, but less than a puzzle. In immigrating from the Guangdong Province China to Macau and later Hong Kong, they drifted and percolated to certain points of conflict that lead to different dimensions of habits and fragmentation of episode, but eventually they succeeded to adjust and compromise to each other as an integrated couple.

Mom was born in an economically stable family whose father originally did business well but passed away in his early thirties. Growing up in the 1920s, unfortunately her father's early death did not allow mom to go to a modern school but had developed an unusually conventional female character and image through her own self learnings. Upon her arrival to Macau, which was a Portuguese colony at time, she quickly adopted to a new social setting in overcoming financial hardship by her inborn talent for sewing skills that even slowly turned to fulfil her dream of owning a private property and enjoy the freedom of enhancing personal life style.



My mom's mother and her blind date
image in a photo.



From left to right: Dad, Mom's mother and Mom at their native village

My father, a famed Chinese poet at his village, grew up in a landlord family in Guangdong Sanshui (廣東三水) district with strong intellectual legacy. He contributed his life-long energy into composing classical Chinese poems and devoting onto calligraphy practice as a mean to identify his merits among the peers. Soon before or after the political turmoil occurred in Macau in 1966, our family moved to Hong Kong, entering a new stage in life for dealing with series of new challenges at a multi-cultural modern city, a Pearl of the Orient. Encountering with financial pressure, my father had to give up his habitually comfortable social life and started to be a multiple jobs holder for making additional income to support the family. Experiencing a dramatic tension of career development and change of living track in times, between the duo cities of Macau and Hong Kong, my Yin-Yang parents were still an integrated couple paddling in a small boat through the waves of water here and there....



My mom had brought up six children. Four of us were born in Macau. (The kid on the left is me.)