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Juvenilia (Yale Series Of Younger Poets)



Synopsis

Ken Chen is the 2009 winner of the annual Yale Younger Poets competition. These poems of maturation chronicle the poet's relationship with his immigrant family and his unknowing attempt to recapture the unity of youth through comically doomed love affairs that evaporate before they start. Hungrily eclectic, the wry and emotionally piercing poems in this collection steal the forms of the shooting script, blues song, novel, memoir, essay, logical disputation, aphorism—even classical Chinese poetry in translation. But as contest judge Louise Glück notes in her foreword, "The miracle of this book is the degree to which Ken Chen manages to be both exhilaratingly modern (anti-catharsis, anti-epiphany) while at the same time never losing his attachment to voice, and the implicit claims of voice: these are poems of intense feeling. . . . Like only the best poets, Ken Chen makes with his voice a new category."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Juvenilia is about the absurdities of structuralisms, the complexities of relationships, and the loneliness of growing up. Chen opens up his book with a meditation on responsibility. More precisely, he tries to ask whether maturity is about partaking on responsibilities that an individual has chosen or taking up those imparted on us by society. In the second part of his book he ponders on Actually, this review is much better than mine:[...]

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