

The Yellow Door
Poetry by Amy Uyematsu
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Size: 7 x 9; Pages: 112
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Pub Date: April 2, 2015



Amy Uyematsu

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The Yellow Door

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Fascinating and fearless, this collection of poetry maps a Japanese-American woman's six-decade odyssey from yellow peril to yellow power.

Sansei Amy Uyematsu's *The Yellow Door* celebrates her Japanese-American roots and the profound changes that have occurred in her lifetime. As a woman born after World War II, her six decades in Los Angeles are captured in verse that link Hokusai woodblock paintings, her grandparents' journeys to California, church parties playing Motown music, and Buddhist obon festivals. With the color yellow as a running theme, Uyematsu embraces "the idea of being a curious, sometimes furious yellow." A genuine product of the sixties, she adds her own unique LA Buddhahead twist to Asian American identity in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Praise for *The Yellow Door*

"*The Yellow Door* is both an exuberant and heartfelt dialogue between the poet's past and present. Amy Uyematsu, now a grandmother herself, now stands in the middle of five generations, pondering decisions made by her immigrant grandparents as well as her younger self. The role of 'yellow' in forming and reforming Uyematsu's ethnic and political consciousness is explored ferociously without apology. Once viewing herself as an outsider, Uyematsu has found freedom to truly dance. A pitch-perfect collection by one of LA's finest poets."

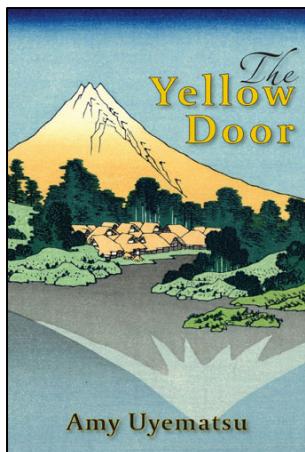
— Naomi Hirahara, Edgar Award-winning novelist

"*The Yellow Door* is a mature and ambitious book, unapologetic about identity politics and peopled with literary friends of the Asian-American movement and other vivid 'historicized' apparitions. Charlie Chan, relocation camps, Executive Order 9066, *sansei* brides . . . all the familiar movement monikers will make the reader nostalgic for her activist past. . . . *Sigh*, those were the days when social protest really mattered! A thoroughly compelling read! An enthusiastic 'thumbs up!'"

— Marilyn Chin

Biographical Note

Amy Uyematsu is a third-generation Japanese-American poet and teacher from Los Angeles. She has published three previous poetry collections: *30 Miles from J-Town* (Story Line Press, 1992), *Nights of Fire, Nights of Rain* (Story Line Press, 1997), and *Stone Bow Prayer* (Copper Canyon Press, 2005). Her first book was awarded the 1992 Nicholas Roerich Poetry Prize. Amy was a co-editor of the widely-used UCLA Asian American Studies anthology *Roots: An Asian American Reader*.



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More Praise for *The Yellow Door*

“Amy Uyematsu holds nothing back in this insightful, compelling and poetic narrative that gives a personal voice to the history of our nation’s Asian-American citizens. Indeed, there are poems of struggle and pain here, but also of humor and joy, for at the heart of this work is the love, honor and rightful pride of a Japanese-American poet whose commitment to freedom and justice combines with dignity and compassion as she unflinchingly engages the world that brings itself to her door. I am terrifically moved by this work.”

— Peter Levitt, Recipient of the Lannan Foundation Award in Poetry

“Amy Uyematsu is one of LA’s best poets, one of our most necessary voices. *The Yellow Door* takes us on neighborhood walks and beach walks along the Pacific and across generations, enjambing eras and pungent seasons in a phrase, granitic continents and the salt of history folded in the creases of caesura. I’m grateful for this book, which I receive like a bowl offered redolent and steaming with both hands.”

—Sesshu Foster

From *The Yellow Door*

The Pendant

“Where is it from,” he asks. I look down at the green and orange stones engraved with Chinese characters –“Asia, maybe Thailand,” I reply, ready to go on my way. But the young man steps closer, like those foreign-born who haven’t learned the invisible lines of physical boundary, that distance respecting the female.

I’m caught off guard when he lifts the necklace, his fingers almost touching my breast. “It’s jade,” no hesitation in his voice, and he unbuttons a shirt collar, revealing three slender rings on the chain around his neck – “These are jade too, I’m from the Philippines.”

I search his face for features like mine.
He claims he has some Chinese blood, while I see
a freckled complexion and eyes set too deep.
Reaching again for my pendant, he’s making me nervous -
his brief gesture so intimate.

Almost greedily, he takes in my Japanese features,
and I recognize that hunger for home
in this crowded room where no one looks like me.
Just before I turn away, he appeals,
“I always wear jade.”