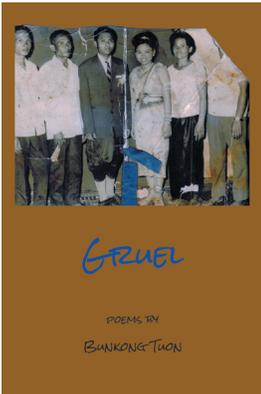


Press Release

For Release: Immediately Contact: Raymond Hammond, Editor; 917.843.8825; rhammond@nyq.org
 Publication Information: 6 x 9 in.; 130 Pages; LCCN: 2015942607; ISBN: 978-1-63045-006-9
 Publication Date: June 25, 2015 Website: <http://books.nyq.org/author/bunkongtuon>
 Suggested Retail: 16.95 USD; 17.95 CAN; 10.95 GBR; 11.95 EUR; 15.95 AUS
 Availability: Amazon, Barnes and Noble, Powell's, Small Press Dist. To the Trade: Ingram Distribution, SPD

NYQ Books™ announces the publication of *Gruel* by Bunkong Tuon



June 25, 2015 - New York, NY - NYQ Books™ is proud to announce the publication of *Gruel* by Bunkong Tuon. In his first full-length collection, *Gruel*, Bunkong Tuon documents the lives of Cambodian refugees and explores the poetic landscape of a Cambodian America. Written tenderly, with honesty, intelligence, and occasional humor, *Gruel* is populated by survivors such as a boy who loses his mother to the Khmer Rouge regime, a grandmother who risks her life to steal a few grains of rice for her grandson, an uncle who is beaten by Thai military police for night fishing outside a refugee camp, an aunt who leaves the East Coast to buy a donut shop in California, a father who re-experiences the traumas of the Cambodian Genocide, a young man who discovers Charles Bukowski in a Long Beach public library, a professor who teaches about the horrors of war to college students at a private college in Upstate New York, to name a few. It's a book about memories, ghosts and haunting, personal loss and historical traumas, losing and finding home, discovery and self-invention; above all, it's a book about love, sacrifice, and hope.

Fred Merchant, author of *The Looking House*

There are many ghosts here," writes Bunkong Tuon in the poem that opens *Gruel*, his profoundly moving first book of poetry. Here are ghosts of those who perished during the genocidal terror of the Khmer Rouge, ghosts that include the poet's own mother. And here too is the story of those who survived, refugees who, like the poet himself, had to flee to a strange land. Arriving in the United States as a boy, raised by his extended family, Tuon came of age struggling to understand his hyphenated identity, and in the process fell in love with poetry, and poetry, one can see, saved his life. Thus there is an epic sweep to this work, yet in its crystalline, intimate lines, we glimpse a place within where ghosts still live and a soul might be forged, that place where, as Emily Dickinson said, "the Meanings are."

Afaa Michael Weaver, Author of *The Plum Flower Trilogy*

Gruel is a book that goes beyond courage to a willingness to let fire mesh with skin in order to make the journey inside what we call the American. Carried across the back of his grandmother through the mountains as they fled the Khmer Rouge, the poet puts the reader on the back of universal human trauma to travel toward the deepest commonality of the human, a willingness to love despite the dangers of attachment.

Chanrithy Him, Author of *When Broken Glass Floats: Growing up Under the Khmer Rouge*

Bunkong's gift as a poet is reflected in his remarkable ability to visually and vividly tell his stories that make you want to keep reading his poetry collection. *Gruel* is heart-warming and inspiring.

Sydney Lea, Vermont Poet Laureate

How can a poet's work at once seem artless and be deeply moving? As writer myself, I have no idea. As reader of *Gruel*, I can only say, behold. A marvelous debut.

Born a few years before the Khmer Rouge takeover of Cambodia in 1975, Bunkong Tuon remembered very little of the atrocities in Cambodia. In 1979, he escaped with his grandmother and extended family to live in refugee camps in Thailand before settling in Malden, Massachusetts in the 1980s. His poetry and nonfiction have appeared in *The New York Quarterly*, *The Paterson Literary Review*, *Chiron Review*, *The Más Tequila Review*, *Nerve Cowboy*, *Numéro Cinq*, *Misfit Magazine*, and *The Massachusetts Review*, among others. He is an associate professor of English at Union College, in Schenectady, NY.



photo by
Nicole M. Calandra

NYQ Books™ was established in 2009 as an imprint of The New York Quarterly Foundation, Inc. Its mission is to augment the *New York Quarterly* poetry magazine by providing an additional venue for poets who are already published in the magazine.

<http://books.nyq.org/author/bunkongtuon> • PO Box 2015 • Old Chelsea Station • New York, NY 10113