

***BENT, BOWED AND UNBROKEN: An Interview
with Poets Geneve Flynn, Lee Murray, Christina Sng
and Angela Yuriko Smith***

By Alyssa Vorobey, HWA Student Blog Assistant

It is unusual to create a sequel to a fiction anthology with a poetry collection. Lee Murray and Geneve Flynn were awarded a Bram Stoker for their anthology *Black Cranes: Tales of Unquiet Women* which featured Southeast Asian women authors of horror. Murray and Flynn have now teamed up with Bram Stoker nominee Angela Yuriko Smith and two-time Bram Stoker winner Christina Sng to share with us a marvelous poetry collaboration entitled *Tortured Willows: Bent. Bowed. Unbroken.*



GENEVE FLYNN



LEE MURRAY



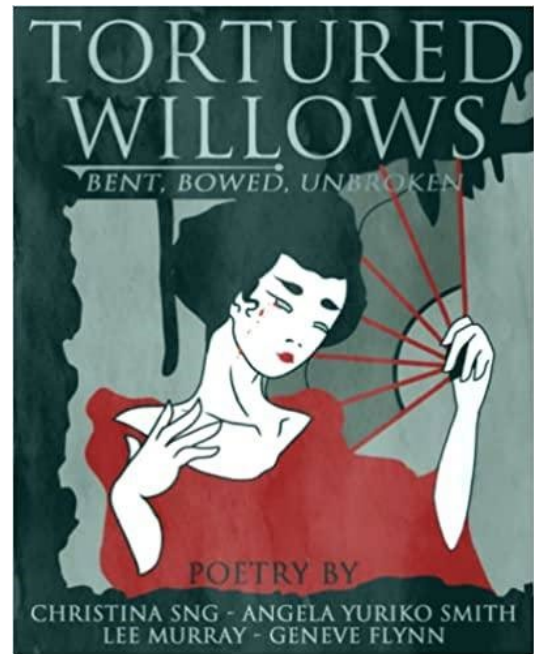
**ANGELA YURIKO
SMITH**



CHRISTINA SNG

The authors agreed to an interview with HWA Student Blog Assistant Alyssa Vorobey to share their thoughts on this powerful collection.

Q: *Tortured Willows*, a collaborative compilation of your work was released on October 7th. How do you feel now that it is out for the world to see? What was it like to work together on this collection?



LEE MURRAY: Alyssa, there was simply so much more to say. The response to Black Cranes was so empowering, so far-reaching, so overwhelming, that Geneve and I knew a second volume would be inevitable. When Angela approached me to ask when exactly that might happen and what she might do to hurry us up, the fact that she's also a horror poet fired up a dormant synapse in my grey matter. What if we were to switch from prose to poetry?

Would the work retain the same power? Three of my former Cranes sisters were persuaded it could, that poetry would enable us to take a fresh and even deeper look at the themes of otherness and expectation introduced in Black Cranes. I couldn't be prouder of the result, a collection of 60 moving poems supported by vignettes. I've read Tortured Willows several times now, and some of the poems still make me cry. But it hasn't just been about the product: the process has been just as uplifting. Working with these talented women has been an exquisite joy, the sentiment in Angela's poem "Four Willows Bound" describing our collaboration perfectly. It's an honour to appear on the pages of Tortured Willows with my Willow sisters, Christina, Angela, and Geneve.

GENEVE FLYNN: I'm so, so proud of this collection. When Black Cranes was released, readers said that the anthology provided a gateway into horrors and cultures that they were unfamiliar with. Tortured Willows invites the reader further in and deepens and widens the

conversation. We've had such wonderful feedback and support from the horror community.

In saying that, I was terrified and excited to work on the collection. This is my very first foray into poetry and I was worried that my work would fall short. But Angela, Lee, and Christina were unwavering in their belief; I knew I just had to try. I ended up reveling in the experience.

CHRISTINA SNG: It was incredible. The gathering of a sisterhood across countries.

ANGELA YURIKO SMITH: First, it was breathtaking to work with all three of these talented ladies. We have such a range of experience levels from Geneve's first poems, Lee as a newer poet and Christina as an established poet. Despite the different levels of experience, I feel like the poems all came out of a place of raw truth. As far as how I feel now... like I finally figured out what I've wanted to say all my life. I didn't even know I needed this conversation until I was caught in the middle of it.

Q: Lee, this was your first poetry collection. Where did you look for instruction and inspiration? What were some of the challenges you faced in translating your knowledge and experiences into poetry?

LEE: Over recent years, I've attended numerous poetry workshops and webinars facilitated by international poets like Stephanie Wytovich, Donna Lynch, and Linda Addison, and by New Zealand poets like Jenny Argante and Anne Salmond. (Hint, the HWA offers many of these opportunities.) By attending these events, I was hoping to gain insights that would help me make my prose sing. So as a relatively new poet confronted with the task of writing a series of poems for Tortured Willows, I went back to my notes from those sessions for expert ideas on form and inspiration. One poem in my series (which also appears in the HWA Showcase) was teased from an exercise at a webinar by Linda D. Addison, for example. Angela also suggested that Geneve and I explore some poetic forms as good frameworks for hanging ideas on, which is why you'll see pantoums, ekphrastic, concrete, terzanelle and other poetic forms on the pages of Tortured

Willows. For inspiration, I turned to my own experience, books that have inspired me, and Asian myth. Two poems were teased from the texts of stories I'd written previously. And because I'm currently the Grimshaw Sargeson Fellow for my prose-poetry collection, Fox Spirit on a Distant Cloud, an exploration of Chinese women's diaspora in New Zealand seen through lens of the shapeshifting fox spirit of Asian myth, some of the poems are inspired by the research I've been undertaking for that project—snippets drawn from historical archives and newspaper clippings. As for the challenges, self-doubt casts a long shadow, and for that, I turned to my family, my colleagues, and my Willow sisters for support.

Q: Each section of *Tortured Willows* leads to the next, but each one also has a different theme and focus, much like individual branches of a willow tree. What roots did you start at to find the purpose and meaning of the poems you wrote?

LEE: What a beautiful way to put it. I think having worked together before gave us a head start because, not only

were we all familiar with the original intent and ambiance of Black Cranes, but we began Tortured Willows from a place of mutual respect. There was that deep connection that comes from shared understanding and experience, and a desire to keep the conversation going. So those were the roots. Beyond that, we gave each other permission to explore aspects of the theme in ways which resonated for us personally. This is something I've learned over several works as a curator-editor: when you give talented writers the kernel of an idea and ask them to interpret it however they see fit, they invariably take that notion and knock it out of the park, extending and subverting that kernel into narratives that are even more powerful than anything you might have envisaged. This is because things which are meaningful and heartfelt for the writer will be reflected in the writing. However, even though our plan for Tortured Willows was to present four interconnected series of poems, in the end, the uniqueness of each section, and the cohesiveness of the work, surprised us all.

GENEVE: At the time I was writing, there was a groundswell of discontent around certain issues, such as

the #MeToo movement, and how gendered violence was being addressed, particularly in Australia. That certainly fueled some of my works. I also pulled from some of my own experiences and stories from folks who are close to me. Most of my poetry in the collection focused on how Asians, women, and Asian women are perceived, and how that perception is perpetrated, and what comes out of that thinking.

CHRISTINA: I looked at the horror stories I heard growing up, going back to the history of young immigrant women back in the 1800s to the time of my grandmother, surviving two wars, a single mom with three children, then to the scary tales we told as children and teenagers in a developing Singapore, and finally, the horrors of what still happens now. My quartet is the story of women living here. And there's so much more to tell.

ANGELA: The first poem I wrote was "Grandmother Shuffles," and it's what I thought my section would be about—what it was like to grow up mixed, my grandmother losing her name, not knowing we were

Uchinanchu until later in life because it was a secret. I mentioned to a friend about my latest WIP and he asked me about my shisa. I had no idea what he was talking about but when I looked it up I fell in love with the little married pairs of lion dogs particular to Okinawa. I wondered what else I didn't know about so I started scratching at the surface. Writing this collection has been like blowing on a frosted pane of glass, melting a peephole and seeing an outside world for the first time. I didn't even know this world existed, but now that I've seen it, I want to break all the windows and let it in, and me out.

Q: Geneve, why did you choose to use both Asian imagery and Western imagery and folklore such as the three fates, and how did you find the concepts and elements that linked them together?

GENEVE: I'm a bit of a magpie when it comes to inspiration. I'll collect whatever catches my eye. I'm also caught between two cultures. Half of my childhood was spent in various parts of Asia, and the other half was in

Australia, so I grew up hearing stories about Malaysian and Chinese myths and legends, while reading books on Greek mythology, vampires, and werewolves.

In my poem “Mouth, and Feet, and Hands, and Eyes,” I wrote about returning to Malaysia as an adult and facing a barrage of advice from my relatives. Blending the Three Fates with this memory reflects that sense of mislocation; I wasn’t fully western, nor did I fit any slot my aunties were trying to shove me into.

So, in essence, my experience as part of a diaspora linked everything together.

Q: Immigrants and their children often face immense pressure to conform both to a parent culture they don’t have full access to, and to the dominant culture where they are living. This dichotomy is the perfect base for body horror because the need to fit in can be physically illustrated. Can you tell me a little bit about that?

LEE: This dichotomy is my life. Part Chinese-Japanese, part ‘white devil’, born and living down under in

Aotearoa at the intersection of cultures, I sometimes feel I don't belong anywhere. (It's interesting that this is the first time I have included my Japanese heritage. I have never admitted to that before, never typed it anywhere, the result of generational shame. I should probably write a poem about that). Dichotomy is a lonely place, and I admit to being complicit in my isolation, with many of those cultural expectations (and accusations) embedded in my soma. So much so, that there have been times when I've been convinced that if I just contort myself sufficiently, I might fit into one side or the other, or perhaps I could simply excise myself completely. Maybe then the hurt and isolation would go away. I've written two body horror poems for Tortured Willows, "exquisite" and "cheongsam", which reflect this theme.

GENEVE: I wrote about that very thing in two poems: "What the Mirror Showed Me" and "Penanggalan's Lament." Both were inspired by my experience of coming to Australia only a decade or so after the White Australia Policy was abolished. The policies prevented people of non-European ethnicity from entering Australia,

particularly Asians and Pacific Islanders. Growing up, I faced racist abuse and heard speeches from politicians warning that Australia was in danger of being “swamped by Asians.” I grew up wishing that I had blue eyes and blond hair. I wanted to hold up for examination that sense of self-erasure based on what you were told you looked like, and what you would do to yourself with that knowledge.

ANGELA: I didn't know how to cover this in the collection, but one of the revelations I had was about my great-aunt—my grandmother's older sister. I don't have all the details because it's been buried in fear, but my understanding is that she committed suicide by choking herself on toothbrushes. A family demon was blamed, but as I read about kami-daari and compared it to my own experiences, the story transformed into a tragedy for me. I believe she was trying to hide what she was going through, perhaps the whole family was, and without the support she just couldn't make it through the trial. I know I will not be able to let this conversation go because of this. I have daughters, and they have daughters. I don't

want any of them, or anyone else, going through this trial alone. If I don't share what I've learned, the next tragedy is on me.

Q: Writing poetry is cathartic, but it takes digging up and remembering the things that cause pain. What were some of the ways you coped emotionally with writing the darker poems, and what advice do you have for poets looking to dip their toes into horror?

LEE: All writing is defiance. Writing horror allows us to address our fears, to wrestle our demons onto the page, and poke them with a stick, albeit from a safe distance. In Black Cranes, and now with Tortured Willows, our intent has been to reveal our experience as Asian women through the lens of horror. To shake off the shackles of those tired Asian girl tropes and reveal ourselves as complex, nuanced, and valid. Because that sense of being 'othered' is exacerbated when our true selves are hidden. So simply by writing these poems, by giving voice to our hurts, by being unquiet, has, bizarrely, helped me to deal with the emotional upheaval of writing them.

GENEVE: Writing horror is a coping mechanism for me. It allows me to take out the pain and fear, and to pull it apart, reshaping it into something I have control over. If things get overwhelming, having support around you is really helpful. Have friends to celebrate with, to commiserate with, to remind you when to take a break. And a good caper every now and then is essential.

CHRISTINA: Self-care. Remembering the good of the past and present. Writing has been cathartic. Knowing that I'm documenting a part of my own story and the stories I've amalgamated into me.

Advice for poets: Write. Get your story out into the world. Then edit it into shape.

ANGELA: Give yourself the space to mourn. I can usually stay on task and work quickly to meet deadlines, but this collection had me worried. All I could do was research, make notes and weep. I went through all the stages. Then, in the final week, the tears stopped, and I was galvanized.

I had finally processed and needed to get it all out. If I hadn't given myself that time to absorb, I wouldn't have made the pivotal connections I did. "Pivotal" is not an exaggeration, either. This collection has turned me in a completely different direction from where I thought I was headed. I'm facing a new path, but for the first time it looks familiar to me. My new direction appears to be leading me home.

Q: Christina, when people mention death, to someone in the Western world the first thing that comes to mind is usually a male figure in a black cloak with a scythe (or the Sandman character) and poems such as *Because I could not stop for Death* or *Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night*. In *Conversations With The Dead* 1928, that visual was subverted and both Death and the dead were female, all of them accepting of the freedom that came with it. A number of the female protagonists in *Tortured Willows* died because they were undervalued and abused or wanted dead. How does the fact that Death was freedom for these

characters reflect on society at large and on how much still needs to change?

CHRISTINA: The fact that death means freedom shows how unbearable life can be for so many women, that death is a gift, a reward, not the hell others fear. This is a barometer of how far we are from a society that values women.

Q: Angela, folklore and tradition are a way to reconnect with a culture that has been heavily affected by assimilatory pressures. How did you search for the memories and experiences of the Ryukyu people? How has writing poetry about it changed your understanding and perspective on cultural erasure?

ANGELA: One of the things the Uchinanchu believe is that they are a people of spirit. The color of the skin and racial percentages don't matter. It's all about the spirit that connects us as a people. That was an amazing thing to go from being a mixed-blood to a whole-spirit all at once. Because of this, I did a lot of listening, watching and

receiving. Where years ago I couldn't find anything on my family, suddenly the floodgates opened. Small coincidences opened doors everywhere. I even found the address where my great-great grandparents came from so I know what hajichi tattoos I will be getting. The entire experience felt like I was being liberated, and I was somehow liberating my ancestors. As far as cultural erasure, one of the reasons why it is so hard to find my personal family history is because a pastor advised members of my family to cut off that part of our history because it was a passage for demons. This counsel was given to people who keep tablets on the family altar with the names of those who have gone before and keep their dead as part of their living celebrations. In my mind, his advice could serve no purpose except to feed his own selfish need for ego. I'll make sure to pass his address on to all my infuriated ancestors.

Q: One of the beautiful things about the collection is that it doesn't stop with the poetry. Everything, the titles, the allusions, the explanations, the references, they all push the reader forward to explore and learn

about Asian culture and history. Overall, the experience of reading the collection, as someone who hasn't lived the experiences of a Southeast Asian woman, was incredibly immersive. What are some of the key things you would like both the reader who has lived some of these experiences, and the reader who hasn't to learn from the collection?

LEE: The inspiration vignettes, references, photographs, and Kyra Starr's gorgeous cover design are intended to draw readers in and inform and enhance the reading experience. The vignettes have been especially well received, I think because they make the poems more accessible through references, definitions, and insight into the poets' intent. More than one reader has contacted me saying they have been forced down their own research rabbit hole as a result, which means the poems are not only touching hearts, they're making people want to learn more.

And for those readers how might share our experience, I hope you feel seen.

GENEVE: One thing that strikes me when I encounter “othering” is the assumption that because I look Asian, I represent all possible variations. It didn’t matter that I told my (ex-) dentist that I don’t speak Chinese, he would still try to practice the same tired phrases of Cantonese he knew on me...every single check-up. It didn’t matter that I told someone that I’m Chinese, they still said “konnichiwa.” Something that I love about both Black Cranes and Tortured Willows is that we’ve had a chance to reveal many more facets of who we are. I hope folks can take away the understanding that the Asian experience isn’t monolithic, and for those who have lived some of the experiences: whatever variation you are is perfectly fine. The other thing I’d love for readers to take away is that Asian women aren’t all quiet and submissive.

CHRISTINA: That this is just the tip of the iceberg and there are a million more stories to tell. Even today, I am learning new things about the experiences of women in my country, past and present, and they are as horrific as any of my poems in Tortured Willows.

ANGELA: Learn with me. Much of the Uchinanchu culture has vanished. The language is listed as “severely endangered” by the Endangered Languages Project. Of 950,000 Uchinanchu spread across the world, only about 95,000 could still speak it in 2011. The last women to wear the hajichi hand tattoos have passed away. Many second and third generations don’t know who we are, or have been told we were Japanese in an effort to protect us. US military bases in Okinawa still occupy 20% of the Ryukyun Arc in spite of protests. Those bases have the highest rate of sexual assault of any in the world, with the youngest victim to date 9 months old. One of the reasons this has happened and continues to happen is because of cultural erasure. Secrets allow secrets, silence grows in silence. The world is changing and the unquiet are no longer willing to bite their words back. I hope our collection inspires rising voices.

Q: Adding on to the previous question, what are some examples of representation, or lack thereof that led

you towards writing, and especially writing horror, about the Southeast Asian experience?

LEE: It was the lack of representation by Southeast Asian women in horror that prompted us to curate Black Cranes. When Geneve and I met in an empty lobby at GenreCon twenty minutes before the panel was due to start, we recognised that lack within minutes. Of course we were there early: we'd bought into the conscientious Asian girl trope through generations of socialisation. An exchange about tropes led us to ask: "Where are our Asian sister horror writers?" We knew they were out there, but at the time there was no community, no vehicle, to give voice to our experience. Maybe it was dark magic, or telepathy, but somehow Geneve and I understood immediately that we would need to create that sisterhood.

GENEVE: My first experience of representation was through comics. My family owned a newsagency (kind of like a corner store where you can buy newspapers and magazines) in Australia, and I spent a lot of time reading X-Men comics when I should have been working. I

remember being overjoyed at discovering a character called Jubilation Lee—an Asian female with the power to create fireworks. I thought her powers were a little dinky, but she shared a major storyline with Wolverine. I'd never seen a female Asian as a main character in an English text before (plus, she wasn't a love interest, included for titillation, nor for the purpose of fridging) and it opened up a whole range of possibilities.

CHRISTINA: The cultural nuances in Southeast Asia are incredibly diverse and one would have to spend much time in each country to fully experience them. In Singapore alone, we have various Chinese dialect groups, such as the Cantonese, the Hokkiens, and the Teochews. Each group celebrates and practices sacred and special days differently, some of which are designated public holidays. Malays and Indians have their own traditions that are national holidays as well, and we have a long history of celebrating them together. Having lived in Singapore almost my entire life, I've been able to have an idea of what cultures and their practices are like in our neighboring Malaysia, Indonesia, and beyond because of

our familial ties and friendships. And most importantly, we share our ghost stories. There are so many to tell and I think with Black Cranes and Tortured Willows paving the way, the world is ready to hear them.

ANGELA: Representation is vital. I grew up thinking my family was Japanese. It was sometime in my thirties that I found out that we were Okinawan, and there was a difference---what the difference was no one seemed to know. We all eat rice, have black hair, and are short... so I just assumed it was a matter of maps. Lines were drawn on paper somewhere and who cares? But this brief dip into the truth has left me soaked with it. Lack of representation claims life, steals joy and cheats us all whatever end of the spectrum we are on. Like Uchinanchu are a people of spirit, aren't we really all connected that way? You really can't spit on your neighbor without getting some of that blown back in your own face. You can't drown someone else without getting wet. Like crabs keeping each other stuck in a trap, no one gets out of here alive unless we work together. Representation is universally, unequivocally vital.

Q: Often the fear in horror is a fear of the other. Both in *Tortured Willows* and in *Black Cranes, Tales of Unquiet Women*, part of the focus is on the things that haunt the people who are usually portrayed as the “other” in Western media. Why is poetry that explores otherness so important in horror and how can it encourage people to write and speak about both racism and sexism?

*LEE: Dark poetry is like a sour candy you pop in your mouth and roll around on your tongue for a while, savouring the flavour. It doesn't require the investment of a novel, novella, or even a short story, yet the right combination of words and blank space can conjure entire worlds. The stories in *Black Cranes* are full of unquiet power, but I wonder if *Tortured Willows* will reach a wider audience with its message of otherness simply because of the brevity of each work. The last poem in my series, “Fury”, consists of just 13 words for example.*

GENEVE: One thing I've discovered in writing for this collection is how efficient poetry is in getting right under the skin, and right to the point. You can flense everything away until what you're left with is the heart of what you're trying to say. Being able to evoke emotion and nerve-deep comprehension in a reader with the bare minimum is very, very powerful. Using that to show what it's like to be othered, and the consequences of that othering, does an awful lot to bridge any gaps in understanding.

CHRISTINA: I think otherness is something that happens in every culture. Avenging ghosts and spirits are predominantly women in Asian horror stories. Over here, women are the other. There is gradual change and women are suffering the backlash, but it is too slow and too late for too many women and children. Poetry is so important here because putting it down on paper is the first step to healing.

ANGELA: One of the loveliest things about poetry and fiction is it is a way of telling the truth without exposing the secrets of others. We can unburden ourselves without

pointing any fingers or naming names (unless you're Geneve Flynn!). Another secret power of writing this way is that it builds empathy. Fear, sorrow and pain are cross-cultural. By showing you mine, you can show me yours and we start creating networks of people that are no longer divided by race but connected by it. We are better together, but sometimes we might need a little literary bloodletting to remind us that in the veins we are all the same.

Q: Form plays a big role in poetry. Explain a little about how you choose the forms for your poetry and how the historical context, origins and rhythm of the form contributes to the meaning of the poem. For example, and this is speculation on my part, the repetitiveness of forms such as the terzanelle, used in “Fox Girl” and the pantoum in “When The Girls Began To Fall” is indicative of how the constructs embedded in society are repeated over and over, affecting every generation of people until there is sufficient social uprising to quash and replace the constructs with more constructs.

LEE: That is the exactly the reason. With “fox girl”, I wanted to show how the tyranny and hardship faced by immigrants could have far reaching consequences, and the repetition and resonance of the terzanelle form allowed me to achieve that. I love the way the repetition teased out new meaning and created a crescendo, lending power to certain lines while understating others. I encourage other poets to explore this exciting poetic form.

GENEVE: As the fledgling of the group, I had very little exposure to poetry. When Angela and Lee invited me on board, the first thing I did (after panicking) was research as much as I could about the many forms available. With my poem “When the Girls Began to Fall,” I loved how the repetition and placement of lines in a pantoum meant that they changed meaning as the stanzas unfolded. I wanted that sense of unfolding horror as both the reader and the character discovered the truth, much as I did when I realized what I would face as an Asian woman.

Other forms, I chose because of what they had been traditionally used to express, and I turned them on their head to showcase the themes I was exploring. For example, the sonnet has traditionally been used to express romantic love, but I used the form to write about gaslighting, because I wanted to highlight how often we conflate the two. An ekphrastic poem is supposed to be a reaction to art; I used it to show my reaction to what I thought was a work of art—the FBI wanted poster of an alleged sex trafficker and child pornographer.

Finally, Dylan Thomas’s villanelle “Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night” is an urgent exhortation. I wanted to write a poem that did the same thing. “What You Cannot See” is a call to action: pay attention, you think it will not matter, but it will.

CHRISTINA: I confess I let the poems lead me.

ANGELA: I do love playing with form, but I always return to the linked haiku with a 5-7-5 syllable scheme. Of course, haiku in English is nothing like Japanese haiku so the whole to 5-7-5 or not to 5-7-5 is like trying to argue

flavor preferences. It's personal. This is the form that clicks for me. On the other hand, in my recent digging I found a dynamic tidbit for me. In The Catalpa Bow: A Study of Shamanistic Practices in Japan by Carmen Blacker (and by Japan he also means Okinawa) Blacker interviews Nakayama Tarō about the language of the gods. It reads "Nakayama points out, we can detect in the god's speech the metre which from the earliest times has been fundamental to Japanese poetry, a metre of alternating seven and five syllables... Japanese poetry began as the utterances of a shaman in a trance. Its metre and poetic devices are not the work of man but revealed from a divine source." So for a practicing yuta poet that naturally prefers a 5-7-5 alternating pattern because that's what clicks... you can imagine how stunned and pleased I was. Representation is vital, even when it comes from a textbook not many will be reading.

Q: The transition in form from *Black Cranes*, which was the start, to *Tortured Willows*, which continued the story and captured some of the things that *Black Cranes* couldn't say was excellent. Where do you see

the story going next? Is there another form you would like to explore in the future such as a series of comics or a concept album?

LEE: A concept album! I like the way you think. For the past several months, I've been working as Associate Editor on Flame Tree's Asian Ghost Stories, an anthology comprising both classic and contemporary tales, which I believe is slated for release early next year, so already there is another chance for readers to discover more about Asians ghosts and spirituality, and all couched in some wonderful narratives. As far as other forms go, in addition, to my prose-poem collection, Fox Spirit on a Distance Cloud, which I mentioned earlier, Angela and I have been working on bringing together a collection of essays called Unquiet Spirits, also on the Black Cranes themes. That book is likely to be another year away, but I'm excited about the possibility of further dialogue using yet another literary form. And if there are any filmmakers out there looking to make Black Cranes into an anthology TV series, we're open to it.

GENEVE: Rena Mason, one of our contributors to Black Cranes is the co-editor for Other Terrors: An Inclusive Anthology alongside Vince Liaguno. I'm excited to see the stories of otherness in that anthology. There's also been a lot of diversity in film and screen media lately, and it would be rather wonderful to see some of our horrors play out visually. Black Crane and Tortured Willows in comic form would be amazing.

CHRISTINA: Art. I think art would be wonderful.

ANGELA: Aside from working with Lee on Unquiet Spirits, I've started a nonfiction book on Asian witchcraft, specifically from the experience of yuta. After coming across the revelation of what really most likely happened to my great-aunt, I feel like that's the most important thing I can do in the near future. I barely survived kami-daari myself with three trips to mental institutions, several suicide attempts, drugs, alcohol, homelessness, chronic migraines, self-harming—all part of the average yuta coming-of-age story I wished I'd known about! I want to make sure I share what I've finally pieced together for my

own children and grandchildren so they can be a little more prepared if they wind up getting called. I can only imagine how many other women are out there that suffered the same fate as my great-aunt. Representation absolutely matters.

Lee Murray is a multi-award-winning author-editor from Aotearoa-New Zealand (Sir Julius Vogel, Australian Shadows) and a double Bram Stoker Award® winner. Her work includes military thrillers, the Taine McKenna Adventures, supernatural crime-noir series *The Path of Ra* (with Dan Rabarts), and short fiction collection, *Grotesque: Monster Stories*. A Shirley Jackson Award winner, she is proud to have edited eighteen volumes of speculative fiction, among them *Black Cranes: Tales of Unquiet Women* and *Midnight Echo #15*. Other works include non-fiction (*Mark My Words: Read the Submission Guidelines and Other Self-editing Tips* with Angela Yuriko Smith) and several books for children. She is co-founder of Young NZ Writers and of the Wright-Murray Residency for Speculative Fiction Writers, HWA Mentor of the Year for 2019, NZSA Honorary Literary

Fellow, and Grimshaw Sargeson Fellow for 2021. *Tortured Willows* is her first poetry collection. Read more at <https://www.leemurray.info/>

Geneve Flynn is an award-winning speculative fiction editor and author. She has two psychology degrees and only uses them for nefarious purposes. She co-edited *Black Cranes: Tales of Unquiet Women* with celebrated New Zealand author and editor Lee Murray. The anthology won the 2020 Bram Stoker Award® and the 2020 Shirley Jackson Award for best anthology. It has also been shortlisted for the British Fantasy Award, Aurealis Award, and Australian Shadows Award. *Black Cranes* is listed on Tor Nightfire's Works of Feminist Horror and Locus magazine's 2020 Recommended Reading List. Geneve was assistant editor for *Relics, Wrecks, and Ruins*, a speculative fiction anthology which features authors such as Neil Gaiman, Ken Liu, Robert Silverberg, James (SA) Corey, Lee Murray, Mark Lawrence, Mary Robinette Kowal, and Angela Slatter. The anthology is the legacy of Australian fantasy author Aiki Flinthart, and is in support of the Flinthart Writing

Residency with the Queensland Writers Centre. Geneve's short stories have been published in various markets, including Flame Tree Publishing, Things in the Well, and PseudoPod. Her latest short story, "They Call Me Mother," will appear in *Classic Monsters Unleashed* with some of the biggest names in horror, including Joe Lansdale, Jonathan Maberry, and Ramsey Campbell. Geneve loves tales that unsettle, all things writerly, and B-grade action movies. If that sounds like you, check out her website at www.geneveflynn.com.au

Christina Sng is the two-time Bram Stoker Award®-winning author of *A Collection of Dreamscapes* and *A Collection of Nightmares*. Her poetry, fiction, essays, and art appear in numerous venues worldwide and have garnered many accolades, including the Jane Reichhold International Prize, nominations for the Rhysling Awards, the Dwarf Stars, the Pushcart Prize, as well as honorable mentions in the *Year's Best Fantasy and Horror*, and the Best Horror of the Year. Christina's essay "Final Girl: A Life in Horror" was a finalist in the 2020 Bram Stoker Awards® for Superior Achievement in Short Non-Fiction

and her first novelette “Fury” was anthologized in the multiple award-winning *Black Cranes: Tales of Unquiet Women*. She was born and raised in Singapore where she now lives with her children and a menagerie of curious pets. Visit <https://christinasng.com/> to learn more.

Angela Yuriko Smith is a third-generation Uchinanchu-American and an award-winning poet, author, and publisher with over 20 years of experience in newspaper journalism. She began with newspapers as a photographer, reporter, and editorial assistant, but in 2011 she started writing speculative fiction and as of 2021, she has fiction and poetry published in over 60 books, magazines and ebooks. Highlights of her career include a Bram Stoker Awards® finalist, Elgin nominations for two chapbooks, and in 2019 she won the Science Fiction and Fantasy Poetry Association’s Dwarf Star for her poem “Dark Matters,” a haiku. Her poem “Waiting to Exhale” (HWA Poetry Showcase Vol. VII, edited by Stephanie Wytovich) is a 2021 Rhysling nomination and she was nominated for a 2020 Pushcart Prize. She was also selected as the Horror Writer Association’s Mentor of the

Year for 2020. Angela currently lives in Independence, Missouri with her husband and fellow author and publisher Ryan Aussie Smith, their six-pack of rescue dogs, three rescue Madagascar hissing cockroaches, and 10 chickens. To find out more, visit angelayurikosmith.com.