

Books for Grieving

Janan Chan

McGill University

Montreal, Quebec, Canada

janan.chan@mail.mcgill.ca

In *Inside Out 2*
the emotions of teenaged Riley
are personified

Anxiety, intensely orange, imaginative,
spirals, manufacturing sharp fantasies
of being unloved and never good enough

Right-wing speeches reverberate with a similar angst

a twitchy sour orange monster dominating
the speaker's head, supplying fictions
honed through Evangelical summer camps, murmuring . . .

*Secure their votes or
you will be powerless*

Books with gay characters, he bellows,
will make your children gay!
Books about racism
will dilute white pride!
Books about sexual violence will . . .

will what?

Morrison's *Bluest Eye* is not pornographic
Weeping is not lust

but tragic

*those who yearn to be consoled
nourished & witnessed
by a dependable book*

*will have lost years feeling abandoned
by a school system meant to support them*

AUTHOR BIO

Janan Chan is a PhD student in the Department of Integrated Studies in Education (DISE) at McGill University, Montréal, Canada. His research project engages multilingual language learners in writing translingual poetry for aesthetic and expressive purposes. Completing his MA in English Literature and Creative Writing from Concordia University, he moved to Shanghai, China, where he taught EFL from 2021 to 2024. His poems, appearing in *Warm Milk*, *The Mitre*, *Fauxmoir* and *Soliloquies Anthology*, explore themes such as identity, belonging and nostalgia. Through his regular blog posts for BILD (Belonging, Identity, Language, Diversity), a blog and journal based out of McGill university, he has reflected upon and documented his teaching practices, the subversive uses of internet culture in China and neighbourly trust during China's pandemic lockdown. He was born in Hong Kong and grew up in Toronto, Ontario and a small town in Québec. He now lives in Montréal.



All papers in *Dialogue: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Popular Culture and Pedagogy* are published under a Creative Commons Attribution-Non-Commercial-Share-Alike License. For details please go to: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/us/>.