Hana Shafi aka Frizz Kid is a writer and artist. Known on Instagram for her weekly affirmation series, she is also the recipient of the Women Who Inspire Award, from the Canadian Council for Muslim Women. Her first book, It Begins With The Body, was recently selected by CBC books as one of the best poetry books of 2018.

“When I make things, I know they are taken to be quiet and small. I know there may be no place for them. I know no one is waiting for them. I know it may be that no one wants them. But I must make them. I must. I learn that you must make your art, wherever you are, whoever you are, whatever you have. You must. This is something no one can ever teach a writer. She must find this for herself alone. Over and over. This must.”

—Souvankham Thammavongsa

Souvankham Thammavongsa is the author of four poetry books, Cluster (M&S, 2019), Light (2013), winner of the Trillium Book Award for Poetry, Found (2007) and Small Arguments (2003), winner of the ReLit prize. She was born in the Lao refugee camp in Nong Khai, Thailand, and grew up in Toronto.

Honouring our resistance, celebrating our stories: Asian Heritage Month, 2019

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Growing up, I did not have books

The only reading material there was

were old newspapers laid out on the floor

to dry our winter boots

or wrap things of glass

When I learned to read, the winter boots

lay dripping in the hallway;

the glass, broken and uncovered

because I knew this this

would be my way in

—Souvankham Thammavongsa

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Ness Lee is an award-winning illustrator and internationally-exhibiting artist based in Toronto. She is a graduate of OCAD University with a Bachelors of Design in Illustration, and continues to explore her practice using a wide range of mediums such as ceramics, drawing, painting and mixed media sculpture.

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A SPIDER*

made this
It hadn’t been damaged
and if it had been,
it was built back
over night
Over and over from some small
dark pit,
it spun out
a whole world for itself

Nothing could come close
and even in its brevity
it will outlast
our dim little buildings

—Souvankham Thammavongsa

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Beena Mistry, an illustrator and designer living and working in the Toronto area. By playing with shapes and colours, they like to create work that explores intersectionality. They hold a bachelor’s degree in illustration from Sheridan College and are the web art director for Shameless magazine.
POEM FOR THE RAIN*

Rubber boots, umbrellas, windows, doors, a roof, the gutter — we invent so much to keep from you
You have been talking to us through wreck, through clutter; saying the same thing we’ve never listened to
What arms, what hands there are
have never held, have never been held
Wherever your mouth is, it’s never been kissed
And if there is a heart attached to any of this, it is as boundless as the rest; beating always against everything

—Souvankham Thammavongsa

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Erin Taniguchi is an illustrator and printmaker living in Vancouver, BC. Her work is influenced by spirituality, animals, yoga, handmade items and printmaking methods, particularly relief printing. Erin works primarily in a combination of linocut prints and digital. Her illustration work has been featured in magazines in Canada and the USA.

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