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**“Nothing Like Freedom” - Poet/Activist Nellie Wong celebrates her 90th birthday and 50 years of writing with a new book of poetry.**

*“To dream in oceans of stories, listening to echoes from rituals, ancient and new...”*

SAN FRANCISCO, CA — Chinese American [poet Nellie Wong](#) marks her ninetieth birthday with the publication of *“Nothing Like Freedom,”* a new book of poetry, exploring themes of family, art, activism and aging. In a keynote address delivered at the 2024 Asian American Literature Festival in San Francisco, Wong remarked, “As a working woman, I typed for the bosses... Now, I type for myself, in search of liberation. Indeed, of the cosmic kinship between you and me, us. The material, the physical, the historical, the cultural, the spiritual...” Nellie’s poems document the changes that she has witnessed in her ninety years of living and serve as a record of her resistance to erasure and invisibility.

Nellie Wong was born on September 12, 1934 in Oakland’s Chinatown. As a child, she worked in her family’s restaurant, The Great China. In the late 1960s, while employed as a secretary at Bethlehem Steel, Nellie enrolled in night courses at San Francisco State University, where she took creative writing, ethnic studies and feminist studies classes. In 1975, Nellie served as the first organizer of the Women Writers Union at San Francisco State, a multiracial group of undergraduate and graduate women who organized around issues of race, sex, and class. Her first published poem, “We Can Always,” appeared in *“Poetry from Violence,”* an anthology for the 1976 San Francisco Conference on Violence against Women. Poet and scholar Timothy Yu notes, “One of Wong’s greatest gifts to us has been her unapologetic embrace of poetry as a political act. And while these political commitments may have caused some literary critics to overlook her in the past, I think that it’s fair to say that her time has come around again, with younger poets returning to the kind of political engagement that Wong and other women of color pioneered in the 1970s.”

*“Nothing Like Freedom”* is Wong’s fifth collection, after *Dreams in Harrison Railroad Park* (1977), *Death of Long Steam Lady* (1986), *Stolen Moments* (1997), and *Breakfast Lunch Dinner* (2012). Wong’s poetry has appeared in over 200 anthologies and publications.

## **About “Nothing Like Freedom”**

*Nothing Like Freedom*

HoongHoongLookLook Press (September 12, 2024)

Language: English

Paperback: 122 pages

ISBN: 979-8-9914008-0-0

Dimensions: 5.5" x .375" x 8.5"

Book Price: \$20.00

Published in paperback, “*Nothing Like Freedom*” will be available for purchase at “Nellie Wong at 90” celebratory readings to be scheduled throughout the Bay Area.

Online orders for *Nothing Like Freedom* can be placed with [Eastwind Books of Berkeley](https://www.eastwindbooks.com). Since 1982, Eastwind Books of Berkeley has been a major source for Asian American literature, Asian Studies, Ethnic Studies, Language Learning, Traditional Chinese Medicine and Martial Arts books.

<https://www.asiabookcenter.com>

“As she marks her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday, the poet and activist Nellie Wong has given us a gift: a new collection of poems that bridges the decades of her remarkable career, with work that spans the 1970s to the present...”

— [\*Survival as a Work of Art: Nellie Wong at Ninety\*](#) by **Timothy Yu**, Martha Meier Renk-Bascom Professor of Poetry and professor of English and Asian American Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

“These poems are vivid postcards that bring you right there as if standing over Nellie’s shoulder as she writes/remembers/relives. They are moving slices of life that we get to partake of and in, voyeurs sopping up all the minute, richly, savoring details.”

— **Opal Palmer Adisa**, Author of *The Storyteller’s Return*

“For the last fifty years, Nellie Wong’s poetry has been sounding clarion calls of truth and represents an essential voice in American literature. From her earliest books, through to the newest work, Wong is lyrical, tender, political, and generous.”

— **Kazim Ali**, Author of *The Voice of Sheila Chandra*

“These poems are the work of a steady hand, so many wonderful lines that take you to unexpected places. I will leave them for you to discover, this collection is a treasure.”

— **Kim Shuck**, 7th Poet Laureate of San Francisco Emerita, Author of *Pick a Garnet to Sleep In*

## **About the Author**

**Nellie Wong** has published four books: *Dreams in Harrison Railroad Park*, *The Death of Long Steam Lady*, *Stolen Moments*, and *Breakfast Lunch Dinner*. Her poems and essays appear in numerous journals and anthologies, including *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings By Radical Women of Color*, and excerpts from two poems have been permanently installed at public sites at the San Francisco Municipal Railway. A building at Oakland High School is named after her, she is co-featured in the documentary film, *Mitsuye and Nellie Asian American Poets*, and a poem of hers was nominated for the Pushcart Prize. She traveled to China in the First American Women Writers Tour with Alice Walker, Tillie Olsen, and Paule Marshall, among others. She taught poetry writing at Mills College and women's studies at the University of Minnesota, and is the recipient of the 2022 PEN Oakland/Reginald Lockett Lifetime Achievement Award.

For additional information about the author, please visit [nelliewong@ddns.net](mailto:nelliewong@ddns.net)

## **Upcoming Readings**

### ***Nothing Like Freedom* Bookstore Launch**

**Reading by Nellie Wong**, with special musical guest **Destiny Muhammad**

**Wednesday, November 6th – 7pm – 8:30pm**

**Bird & Beckett Bookstore, 653 Chenery Street, San Francisco, CA 94131.**

Chinese American revolutionary feminist poet Nellie Wong, joined by special musical guest, singer and harpist Destiny Muhammad, will read selections from “*Nothing Like Freedom*” at a bookstore launch event held on Wednesday, November 6th – 7pm at Bird & Beckett Bookstore. <https://birdbeckett.com/>

## **About HoongHoongLookLook Press**

HoongHoongLookLook Press is dedicated to publishing and preserving works that illuminate the history, experiences and struggles of women of the world, and the important role of global feminism and intersectionality in creating a just future for all.

For special purchase orders, author appearances and media inquiries, please contact Andi Wong at [hoonghoonglooklook@gmail.com](mailto:hoonghoonglooklook@gmail.com). Readers are also invited to freely enjoy “**Nellie Wong at Ninety**,” a digital companion project centered around nine poems, chosen by Nellie to represent each decade of her storied life.

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