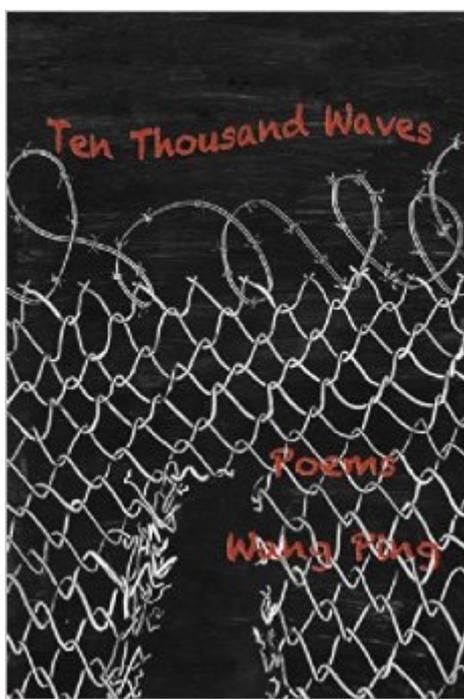


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# Ten Thousand Waves: Poems



## Synopsis

Looking at a wide swath of Chinese history and literature, this collection examines various issues stemming from immigration to America. Wang Ping conveys the voices of centuries of farmers and factory laborers, revolutionaries, writers, artists, and craftsmen. She has a unique gift for telling small stories with powerful emotional effects. The titular poem, "Ten Thousand Waves," was inspired by a tragedy that occurred on February 5, 2004. More than 20 Chinese laborers drowned in Morecambe Bay, England, when they were caught by an incoming tide. They were collecting cockles late in the evening, having been misinformed about the tidal times. The victims were undocumented immigrants, mainly from Fujian Province, China. In 2006, English filmmaker Nick Broomfield directed and produced *Ghosts*, a dramatic film based on the tragedy at Morecambe Bay. Not long after that, another filmmaker, Isaac Julien, commissioned Ping to write a narrative script for his film on global immigration, *Small Boats*. When he saw the finished poem, Julien decided to make a film installation specifically on Chinese immigration, which he entitled *Ten Thousand Waves*

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This book is just great. I love the style -- it's like a poetry of journalism. You read this kind of poetry, and you realize: This is the way to learn about the world, and this is the only way these stories can really be told. The poetry's so beautiful because it so well tells these stories of working to death in Chinese factories, doubting one's ability to support his family suffering misfortune after misfortune, trying to survive in a wildly changing country, hoping not to be left behind, having to flee, not being able to flee... These are people so often characterized by their suffering, it's easy to forget they're

real people. This is where poetry, like Wang Ping's can triumph where news journalism cannot. Wang Ping tells these stories so we can meet these people through her poems and understand they're real people and the suffering is real. The focus, like all of Wang's work, is on the people themselves. I love the collage style she uses, mixing first-person narratives with statistics with images. It's a really beautiful book, and you should read it.

Not only getting to meet this extraordinary author, yet to hear her read a passage of the thought provoking book *Ten Thousand Waves*, I am captivated by many feelings the poems and story of a people only wanting to earn a meager living, and how nature has its own mission and man who has a skewed mission can only place money over life..you can experience the voices, the chill, the night of deep darkness, the suddenness of life being so harshness taken away..Along with the poems of the life of immigrants, Ping patiently points the struggle laughter, the tears of those who work hard and have hope for a better life and questions the existence of those who govern them..A tremendous collection of poems that is a must buy and read.

Since childhood, the poet Wang Ping has been aware of her own restless spirit. "I want to play," she writes in her recent poetry collection, *Ten Thousand Waves*, "See the world before I become too old." Wang Ping's wayward-seeking energy has transported her from the China of Mao's Cultural Revolution across a myriad of geographies, cultures, and fantasies. Like a shaman, Ping dances, seamlessly assembling a layered collage of portraits, stories and dreams. She blends personal experience with conjured people, places, events, and reflections so honestly that we trust her flight from storytelling to poetic reportage, from fiction to fact. Advancing on Ping's often-guileful but compassionate voice, *Ten Thousand Waves* embraces the contradictions of Mao's Cultural Revolution and the enigma of Tibet. She gives voice to the microcosms of life in a new China. She celebrates the simple contentment of a snail merchant and mourns the hope, hardship, and cruelty of immigrant lives in New York, the Metal City of Yongkang and on the murderous tidal flats of Wales. Content drives her diverse stylistic choices. "I consider reading poetry to be a social obligation," Ping says in one interview. "The small people are speaking," she writes. "...and no dam of bullets or machine guns or pepper spray tanks media smears can stop this tsunami of justice and peace | this is not violence." *Ten Thousand Waves* plants images and impressions in the reader's memory where they gestate, waiting to surface in unpredictable forms. Wang Ping's poetry is the work of a mirthful, gentle trickster with an urgent and intricate agenda. In *Ten Thousand Waves*, her restless spirit follows the poet's heart while

her pen delivers the world to us.

Wang Ping is a force of Nature, a surprising event sprung upon us. Behold, and be glad. And if you have a taste for poetry, read *Ten Thousand Waves*. Ping brings us to the brink of our actual being and invites us to get drunk on spring water in cupped hands, and to notice what a rare privilege that has become. She is a prophet of what is, attentive and revelatory. Reading her poems will remind you of your own courage and dignity. She invites you to remember to be alive.

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