



Ten Thousand Waves: Poems

Wang Ping

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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*, after Ping's poem. *Ten Thousand Waves* has been featured at the Pace Foundation galleries in San Antonio, Texas, and at the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

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