

INSTANCES: SELECTED POEMS

JEONGRYE CHOI

Translated by Brenda Hillman, Wayne de Fremery & Jeongrye Choi

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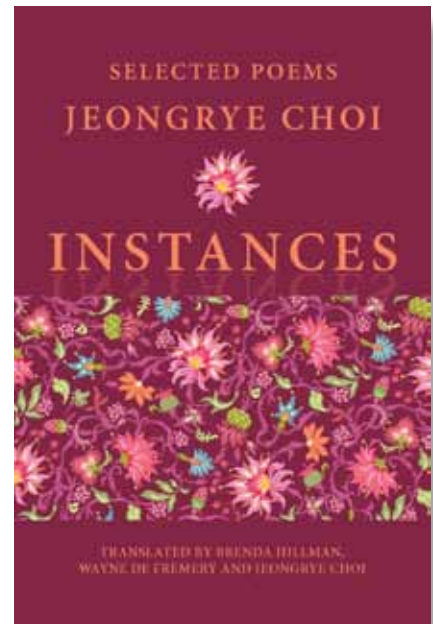
Series Editor, Jon Thompson

Information and Pricing

978-1-60235-234-6 (paperback, \$18; £13; \$18 CAD; €14; \$18 AUS); 978-1-60235-235-3 (Adobe ebook; \$14; £9; \$14 CAD; €11; \$14 AUS) © 2011 by Parlor Press. 145 pages, in English and Korean.

One of Korea’s most exacting and innovative poets, Jeongrye Choi writes a poetry that uncovers the strangeness of everyday experience. Alert and streetwise, but tuned into the undercurrent of things, Choi’s poetry creates environments at once familiar but dreamlike, marked by a preternatural clarity. Favoring imagistic condensation and formal trimness, Choi’s poetry possesses a highly-suggestive, allusive intensity that locates the startling within the familiar. Always rooted in the here-and-now, Choi’s speakers are simultaneously outside it, questioning the propriety of our taken-for-granted arrangements. Delicate and wistful, this poetry has the tensile strength to address itself to the deepest challenges of human experience: as Choi writes, with characteristic (and deceptive) off-handedness, “hey abyss.” In a world of inconstancy and ceaseless transformation, Choi’s poetry forgoes easy consolations and instead offers poetry of the highest order as the only consolation. Reading it offers an almost vertiginous sense of the variousness of experience. As Brenda Hillman observes, “There is a quality of imagination in her work that is still a rare thing in poetry.”

Brenda Hillman is the author of eight collections of poetry, the most recent of which is Practical Water. She is the Olivia C. Filippi Professor of Poetry at Saint Mary’s College in Moraga, California. | Wayne de Fremery recently received his doctorate from Harvard University with a dissertation on Korean poetry from the 1920s. He currently lives near Seoul where he continues his study of Korean literature.



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