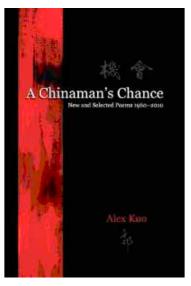
## Wilderness House Literary Review 6/4



A Chinaman's Chance New and Selected Poems 1960-2010 Alex Kuo Wordcraft of Oregon Publisher ISBN 978-1-877655-71-5 \$15.00 2011

Review by *irene koronas* 

"It was another Asian body Its brains blown out by necessity Splattered on TV's evening news Almost twenty years ago

We wondered then if color returned To his face under the moon And if his firebombed village

Had a prayer to move next to

Never again such nights We said that night

We were determined
To make the line shorter
But colonel after colonel
Thirteen knots around our neck
Reach out to Central America now

Again brown bodies tagged and tallied by history While we think "Never again!" In the neighboring sunlight startled..."

A Chinaman's chance, is a timely look back and forward at human nature and the nature of mass fear, fear as applied to 'others.' Kuo shows the greed that hides in men's heads, somewhere it grasps and causes expected destructions, again. Sherman Alexie says, "His (Kuo) vision is sure and uncompromising." This collection starts with a poem named, "gathering children" and the book ends with "in the vicinity of spring" and all the actions taken or not taken, are in the verse:

"It begins with parchment of aspen and it is grief drifting in early arrival.

It is more than think: a deer skull a rabbit's winter coat the thicket of spruce cones a boar's tooth the lynx's skulking

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and the suffering quail the sun's escarpment and the mind's winter coping the summer tick.

Do not believe it is Less than late.

And it ends with the idea of pain slicing up the deep cold without eyes.

Look at it look at it falling from the alphabet."

Alex Kuo has given us, the reader, a book we can be with for many years, and that is the kind of book that feeds my mind and touches my spiritual life. this book deserves a Pulitzer Prize:

"I do not remember its name But when I think of what little It takes to remember that old lie

Because of the way it bent Its shadows deeper over dust The perpetual scaffolding of wishes..."