

ABSTRACT

NEON AND SHADOWS: A MAZE IN TOKYO

As I put my poems together for this thesis, I was thinking of creating a memoir in poetry. I wanted to understand my identity as a postmodern Japanese man, both individually and collectively, through writing the poems presented in this manuscript. Feelings of loss, alienation, and longing are the prominent themes here, especially in my childhood poems that reminisce Tokyo, Japan. When I wrote these poems, I was often conscious of the syllabic patterns of the haiku or tanka: 5-7-5 or 5-7-5-7-7. These patterns are embedded in stanzas here and there.

I believe some historical events and figures, whether or not one experiences them directly, are strong enough to shape the core of his individual identity. So, I included poems that deal with Japan's dark and hidden history of the war in China during World War II, as well as my translations of poems by the Japanese poet, Kotaro Takamura.

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