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# SÃ'ng I Sing



## Synopsis

When it feels like no one lets you live at your own volume you sing. Dynamic and eye-opening, this debut by a National Poetry Slam finalist critiques an America sleepwalking through its days and explores the contradictions of race and class in America. Bao Phi has been a National Poetry Slam finalist and appeared on HBO's Def Poetry. His poems and essays are widely published in numerous publications including 2006 Best American Poetry. Phi lives in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and works at the Loft Literary Center.

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.9 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (8 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

Bao Phi's 'Sống I Sing' was so incredibly good (and highly recommended!) I chose to review it for diaCRITICS (at diacritics.org), a blog for Vietnamese arts, politics, and culture. In that review I made the following observations: Bao Phi's wordsmithing is quite beautiful and incisive, with carefully crafted alliterations and sensory details. His words retain the immediacy, cadence, rawness of voice and breath, even in print. His bittersweet truths are crisscrossed with scars and yet peppered with affection, as in his vignettes on 'The Nguyễns.' Phi's long-awaited debut collection 'Sống I Sing' brings poetry back to the people like nothing else I've seen in Vietnamese American culture. Although he's dedicated it "for my Asian American people" and he's clearly attentive to concerns of the entire Asian American community, the double entendre of the title's first word shouts out to the Vietnamese community in particular, as sống means river in Vietnamese. Phi is wry and witty observer of the registers and markers of inclusion and exclusion, with a deep affection for those who are often violently and mercilessly excluded. 'Sống I Sing' is a clarion call for expressing one's

perceptions and experiences, despite the tangles, ruptures, and sutures evident from the outset. Bao Phi's masterful performances and now his first collection of poetry push us all forward into terrain that's both uncharted and familiar. If you want to check out a more in-depth commentary, the original review is quite long. It can be found by Google-searching: "Call and Response" "Bao Phi"

This book was absolutely amazing. The poetry is moving and hit me really hard... I must have tweeted about half of the book as each phrase sunk in and resonated in my soul. For Us is still one of my favorite pieces from this book. I'll never look at sunflowers the same :-)

Bao Phi combines the rhythm of spoken word poetry with the nostalgia of growing up as a 2nd generation Vietnamese immigrant. The words hit hard and offer a sense of forgiveness to immigrants while indicting the systems and institutions that create the inequalities we face. To put it briefly, I cried almost every poem.

The power within "Song I Sing" lies within the brutal truth of the poetry and the forwardness of its delivery. Song I Sing, is not a book of vague and interpretive poetry, it is as much a collection of personal stories as it is a book of poems. Each poem has enough strength to boom when spoken and echo when read silently. If you are looking for a very modern and profound read, especially ones dealing with racism and racial minorities in the United States, than this is your book. This is poetry with an edge.

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