

## Mongrel: Essays, Diatribes, + Pranks

By Justin Chin

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In a time when memoirs are often less than they claim to be and essays do not say enough, Justin Chin breaks onto the scene with a collection that is a combination of confession, tirade, journalism, and practical joke.

*Mongrel* is a cross-section of Chin's imagination and experiences that calls into question what it means to be an Asian-American in San Francisco, the effect your family will always have on you, and the role sexuality plays in your life. Whether it be Internet pornography or family history, Chin manages to dig deep and uncover not only the truths of everyday life, but also the absurdities that surround them.

*Mongrel* is an exploration and distillation of the experiences and imagination of a gay Asian-American whose sensibilities were formed by the maelstrom of '80s American pop culture. A unique collection from a brash, funny new voice.

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## **Mongrel: Essays, Diatribes, + Pranks** By Justin Chin Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #1343677 in eBooks
- Published on: 2011-04-01
- Released on: 2011-04-01
- Format: Kindle eBook

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## Editorial Review

### Amazon.com Review

Since the early 1990s, Justin Chin has made a name for himself as a "Generation Q" poet, performance artist, essayist, actor, cultural commentator, wisecracker, and slammer. As a gay Chinese American with a punk, postmodern, and perpetually impudent attitude, Chin treats his outsider role with relish and aplomb. He first emerged in print with *Bite Hard*, a 1997 collection of poetry and performance pieces that won critical and popular acclaim. *Mongrel*, an assemblage of opinion pieces and essays, brings out a radically different side of Chin's talent. These 21 prose pieces map out his positions and thoughts on everything from the best way to eat pancakes to the lure of firing guns, from "rice queens" (Caucasian men attracted to Asian men) to the removal of anal fissures. Chin takes on all topics fearlessly--his dissection of professional white Buddhists is simultaneously shockingly flippant and profoundly insightful--and he always manages to surprise or startle. Sometimes he is simply playful, as in "After Yoko" (in which he maps out various art installations with names like "Dead Fag Piece"), or deadly serious, as when he discusses, in "Death of the Castro," the meaning and limitations of a gay ghetto for a multiracial community. Throughout, Chin manages to steer clear of predictable politics, excessive personal angst, or a smarmy hipper-than-thou tone. *Mongrel* is a smart, witty, perceptive--and sometimes disturbing--tour through the life of a young gay man who can deliver not only careful observation and critical discussion but also a laugh or a punch on every page. --*Michael Bronski*

### From Publishers Weekly

Ever wonder how someone copes with the pain of an anal fissure? Chin imagines three elves having "wild adventures" in his colon. In this ragtag collection of essays about being gay, being Asian-American, being an artist and every permutation thereof, Chin offers his take on such topics as delicate surgery, the importance of class, his Asian upbringing, San Francisco's Castro neighborhood, Thai sex clubs, his disenchantment with poetry slams and pretty much anything else that enters his mind. At his most flippant, Chin is downright charming. In a piece titled "Don't Ask Isadora, Ask Me," he advises: "never serve semen with fish or seafood." He's also engaging when he turns unexpectedly sentimental?as he does in remembering his grandmother's meatballs. Even when Chin lapses into straight journalism, as in his description of the pay scales for boys in Bangkok sex clubs, the book is still endearing. The real tossers come when he tries to present himself as a social commentator. Would anyone who's so much as seen a picture of Marx be shocked to read that "Class is all around, and sometimes, we don't see until it is too late"? How surprising is it that "porn may be morally or politically good or bad depending on whom you ask"? Yet despite the occasional bland insight, Chin's eclecticism and voice make the book, like a poetry slam, an enjoyable, if transient, entertainment.

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### From Library Journal

Chin is a Singapore-born, California-based, hip, shaved, tattooed, foul-mouthed gay male. His series of 21 essays is autobiographical, but not in the usual sense. He does tell of his first frightening homosexual encounter and later affairs, his experiences with poetry slams and book tours, being a gay Asian, life in the Castro district of San Francisco, and his love for pancakes. But he also discusses prostitution in Bangkok, malls in Singapore, the Western interest in Buddhism, the Mr. Asian contest, and other topics. A few essays are actually poems; others really are pranks. Chin has already published *Bite Hard* (Manic D, 1997) and numerous articles in anthologies and magazines. He usually speaks as a gay Asian but often stoops to skewering easily skewered topics (Graceland, beauty contests). When he is original, he is insightful. Recommended for gay studies collections. ?Kitty Chen Dean, Nassau Community Coll., Garden City, NY  
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#### **Rose Waldman:**

This book untitled Mongrel: Essays, Diatribes, + Pranks to be one of several books that best seller in this year, this is because when you read this reserve you can get a lot of benefit in it. You will easily to buy this specific book in the book retailer or you can order it by means of online. The publisher on this book sells the e-book too. It makes you more easily to read this book, as you can read this book in your Smart phone. So there is no reason for you to past this book from your list.

#### **Margaret Calderon:**

People live in this new morning of lifestyle always attempt to and must have the spare time or they will get wide range of stress from both way of life and work. So , whenever we ask do people have free time, we will say absolutely yes. People is human not really a robot. Then we ask again, what kind of activity are there when the spare time coming to you of course your answer will certainly unlimited right. Then do you try this one, reading publications. It can be your alternative throughout spending your spare time, the particular book you have read is definitely Mongrel: Essays, Diatribes, + Pranks.

#### **Brett Munoz:**

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#### **William Brown:**

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