

Entered Some Aliens

Siew Hii

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You can lead a queer Asian American to the southern US (including Alabama, Mississippi, North Carolina, and Florida), but it takes an epiphany-laced collection of poems to understand why Siew Hii stayed. One, an extraordinary ability to mine the peculiarity of the situation; two, humor as a default position; and three, the good sense to keep coffee mugs upside down in an Alabama cupboard to foil the cockroaches. Hii's work has appeared in *The Georgia Review*, *Constellations*, *OutWrite Journal*, *The Pinch*, *The American Journal of Poetry*, and several other places. Thanks and praise go to her ancestors, including many from Malaysia and China.

SHIPS IN THE DESERT

For Joe and Jake

As a child, I never understood why forty years in the desert was God's punishment for his chosen people. A three-hour hike through Joshua trees changed me. Everything here wants to kill you, he said. I like that. Desert lavender, dry riverbeds, jumbo rock piles. They don't need us. The yuccas, the pancake pear cactus, the aggressive honeybees just want their water, and they don't need much of it. Aren't there, I ask, a lot of plants for this to be the desert? Bro answers with watery mumbo-jumbo. We sail the ocean tomorrow, to see the sun sink directly into the waters of the Pacific, to feel ocean wind on bare skin, to smell salt. These are different ways of saying the same thing. Every ship gets to be a submarine once.

MATT SUTHERLAND (March / April 2026)

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