

A slipstream meditation on the self, *Saturn Peach* presents a series of collisions and departures of identity, much like the rhythmic separation and reunification of a juggling ball and hand. This ball, however, is soft — it's a peach — and readers don't emerge unscathed, unaffected, unbruised. This peach — this book — has tender flesh.

This peach — this book — has a tough core: tough as in strong, as in complex and intricate (the pit of a peach is webbed with depth). Most striking are Wang's characters, who arrive with cinematic precision, often walking straight out of films like *Kill Bill*, *Goodfellas* and *Psycho*. These movie references provide yet another instance of Wang's skill at overlapping the real and the fictional, crossing realities and blurring the borders of individuality.

The women are rough-and-tumble, punched into literary existence. Wang challenges the idea that women must be petite in poetry, that they should be soft and sweet. Sure, the Saturn peach is smooth, but it's also juicy and jaw-splitting — bite too deep and the pit will cut your teeth.

The book's language is as sharp as incisors. Too vivid and disorientingly exacting to be described as cozy or wholly nostalgic, Wang's depictions of growing up in the city undercut the concept of innocence. In 'Kids,' she writes, "We took the streetcar. The girls shared vodka straight from the / bottle . . . I said why would I want that / it smells awful. L said yeah but it makes you feel good. I didn't / think anything could."

Pain pulls the narrative forward and backward, a sense of longing and loss that gives the book flavour, maneuvers it around the mouth. Wang concocts a surreal dreamscape, plunging the reader into a funhouse of poetic images. Elijah White's interspersed drawings are reminiscent of children's sketches and masquerades. Here comedy and tragedy are welded together like conjoined twins put on display and suffering in an old circus. This is the crying behind the clown mask. These are the tears hidden and hiccupped into the stomach, the raw swell like hunger at the back of the mouth.

In her final poem, 'Green,' Wang writes, "My throat is infinite, / I accept myself." She finishes both with an image of self-acceptance and an image of self-consumption, an image of the self eating the self. This is an ending but also a beginning, the implication being that the poet will continue to digest and amalgamate, that we the readers have only just begun to chew.

