



AAP Interview: Ka Vang

Ka Vang was born in Long Cheng, Laos, in 1975. A playwright, fiction writer and poet, she is a two-time recipient of the Playwrights' Center's Many Voices Fellowship, the 2002 Asian American Renaissance/ Jerome Foundation's Artist Regrant program, the Jerome Study and Travel grant, the Minnesota State Arts Board Artist Grant, and the Bush Artist Fellowship. Her one-act play, DISCONNECT, was performed by Theatre Mu during the 2001 New Eye Festival. Another play, Dead Calling, was performed at Intermedia Arts in Minneapolis in 2001. Her play, From Shadows to Light will be performed by Theater Mu in the fall of 2004 at the Mixed Blood Theater in Minneapolis. She is also featured in two anthologies, Bamboo among the Oaks, and Charlie Chan is Dead 2. She is currently a columnist for the Minnesota Women's Press and Hmong Tribune. She lives in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Interview by:
Bryan Thao Worra
of the Asian
American Press

Asian American Press (AAP): How do you feel about being included in the ground-breaking anthology?

Ka Vang (KV): I feel really honored to be included in such an important literary work, among writers I respect. I also feel it is very important that a Hmong voice is being included in this book. It means that people are acknowledging our contribution to not only literature, but to American life.

AAP: Why do you think the editor chose "Ms. Pac Man Ruined by Gang Life" to be included in the book?

KV: I am not sure. I guess there is a rawness and therefore, truthfulness to the narrator's voice. She is a tough gangsta girl who yearns for more. I have been told that its honesty resonates with readers. Read it and find out yourself.

AAP: What are you working on right now?

KV: I am writing a collection of short stories. I spent over a year researching, and the last six months writing. I am happy to say, I've got some wonderful stories that I can't wait to unleash to the public. I hope to be done by fall of this year, and shop it around to agents and publishers.



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AAP: You have written poems, short stories, plays and column, which is your favorite genre?

KV: I enjoy it all. Sometimes an idea works better as a play because the characters in my head are talking to each other, and sometimes the idea works better as a story because I see the people reflecting to themselves, or I want to write about the color of their eyes, the texture of their skin. I have a play, which was read by Theater Mu a few years back. At first I saw it was poem, but there was too much action, so I turned it into a story, but the narrator was too talky. Finally, I wrote it was a play, and it was perfect.

AAP: What do you think of the explosion of Hmong writers from playwrights to slam poets?

KV: I think it is a great thing. It is truly a Hmong renaissance happening to our people in America. We have an explosion not only in arts, but also politics, and commerce. So I encourage all Hmong writers to get their work out to the community. Every voice makes a difference.

AAP: Where would you like to take your writing?

KV: I intend to spend my entire life writing creatively because I feel it is important that I tell stories about Hmong people with humor, with compassion with sincerity.

AAP: Do you see yourself as a pioneer?

KV: Please, give me break. Weren't those the people that landed on Plymouth Rock? Well, in the words of Malcolm X, I didn't land on Plymouth Rock, it landed on me. So you can interpret that any way you want.