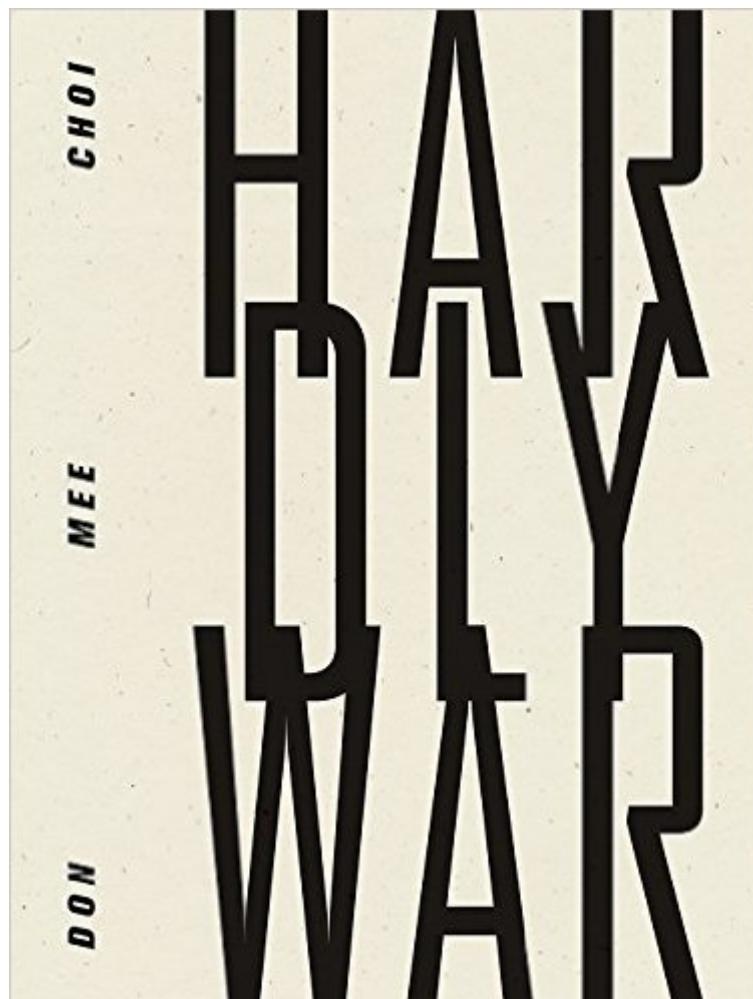


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Hardly War



Synopsis

Hardly War, Don Mee Choi's major second collection, defies history, national identity, and militarism. Using artifacts from Choi's father, a professional photographer during the Korean and Vietnam wars, she combines memoir, image, and opera to explore her paternal relationship and heritage. Here poetry and geopolitics are inseparable twin sisters, conjoined to the belly of a warring empire. Like fried potato chips — I believe so, utterly so — The hush-hush provingground was utterly proven as history; Hardly=History — I believe so, eerily so — hush hush — Now watch this performance — Bull's-eye — An uncanny human understanding on target — Absolute=History — loaded with terrifying meaning — The Air Force doesn't say, hence Ugly=Narration — Don Mee Choi is the author of *The Morning News Is Exciting* (Action Books, 2010), and translator of contemporary Korean women poets. She has received a Whiting Writers Award and the 2012 Lucien Stryk Translation Prize. Her translation of Kim Hyesoon's *Sorrowtoothpaste Mirrorcream* (Action Books, 2014) was a finalist for the 2015 PEN Poetry in Translation Award. She was born in Seoul and came to the United States via Hong Kong. She now lives in Seattle, Washington.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The title of Seattle poet Don Mee Choi's second book, *Hardly War*, is a curious combination of words that seems innocuous enough if you're, say, skimming spines on a bookshelf. But if you give it two seconds' thought, those two words obviously belong nowhere near each other. War is

a binary; you're either at war or you're not. There are no small wars, or halfway wars, or hardly wars. If you go to war and a bullet splinters your skull, there is never a moment when you are semi-dead. The lights are on or off; some words have no dimmer switch. Constructed from poems, chunks of prose, sheet music, photographs, collage, and even the script for an (incredibly short) opera, Hardly War is unlike anything you've ever seen. As excellent as Choi's debut poetry collection The Morning News Is Exciting was, Hardly War has taken an evolutionary leap of a generation or six beyond its predecessor. Choi assembled the book around documents from her father's career as a photographer in the Korean and Vietnam wars. Stitched together like this, it could be shuttled from one bookstore section to the next, never quite finding its home: biography, anthropology, theater, history, poetry.

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