

# PASSING FIGURES

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## ABSTRACT

This creative dissertation is an original work in the genre of memoir. It is a mixed-form memoir, comprised of prose and verse. The memoir contains ten essays that are loosely linked by theme, chronology, or event. Collectively, the prose passages work to tell the story of a man's journey into the vocation of poetry. In doing this, the memoir touches on issues of dislocation, mentoring, and the acculturation to a life in Japan, where the writer permanently resides with his family. The essays reflect upon the influence key people had in helping him respond to poetry: his father, poetry teachers, and Zen Buddhist teachers.

The mixed-form of the memoir evokes and reflects upon the fused and yet dichotomous nature of his life, and provides a visible representation of what the memoir itself seeks to explore: the journey of a man traveling across and between cultures, languages, and national borders in search of a home centered in poetry. The disjunctive quality of the memoir, the movement between prose and verse, allows the memoir to open into wider speculative spaces and resist ultimate conclusions and understandings.