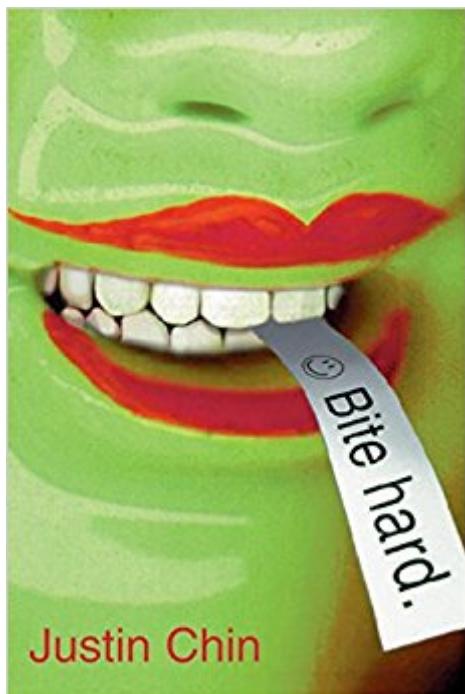


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# Bite Hard



## **Synopsis**

The first collection by award-winning performance artist/poet Justin Chin. In *Bite Hard*, Chin explores his identity as an Asian, a gay man, an artist, and a lover. He rails against both his own life experiences and society's limitations and stereotypes with scathing humor, bare-bones honesty, and unblinking detail. Whether addressing "what really goes on in the kitchen of Chinese restaurants" or a series of ex-boyfriends, all named Michael, Chin displays his remarkable emotional range and voice as a poet. His raw, incantatory, stream-of-consciousness poems confront issues of race, desire, and loss with a compelling urgency that reflects his work as in performance, speaking directly to an audience. Throughout this collection, Chin demonstrates his uncanny ability to convey thought-provoking viewpoints on a variety of controversial subjects.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

*Bite Hard*, a collection of poetry, fiction, and performance pieces by Justin Chin, weaves together a vision of otherness that is unique in gay writing. Chin, who was born in Malaysia, raised in Singapore, and is now living in San Francisco, writes from queer pan-Asian experience: outsiderness times two. Whether describing a series of bad ex-boyfriends (he has had seven named Michael, each worse than the one before) or being pursued by "rice queens" (white men interested only in Asian lovers), Chin's authorial power resides in his ability to articulate humor as well as rage in the reality of what it means to be an Asian American homosexual in a country that valorizes Caucasian heterosexuality. Witty, smart, and sexy, *Bite Hard* is the work of a young artist finding his voice with passion and intelligence.

"He plugs the stage microphone into the page and lyrically blasts the heart of our fears, rage, and import-export nightmarish dreams." - Award-winning author R. Zamora Linmark" He plugs the stage microphone into the page and lyrically blasts the heart of our fears, rage, and import-export nightmarish dreams." - Award-winning author R. Zamora Linmark

After seeing some of Justin Chin's work online, I was intrigued and wanted to read more. He has a strong personal style that heavily utilizes rhythm to create momentum within his pieces, which is especially effective as he was also a powerful spoken word artist. He shares honestly and beautifully from his personal experiences, many of which deeply resonated with me, especially about Asian American queer identity. There are many different styles within this collection, ranging from poems of just a few lines to poems of many pages, using free-form as well as prose-poetry style. I especially enjoyed "A History of Geography" and "Pisser."

I was introduced to Justin Chin's work through an Asian American literature course in college. A year later I found myself still thinking about his shocking poems because in class we had only read "Lick My Butt". I wanted to know more so I bought this book. What I found is a collection of beautiful poetry. Some poems are hilarious and in your face and some are really lovely to read. I went ahead and bought some more of his poetry books. I'd suggest this for anyone with an open mind. I think anyone under that condition could appreciate his work.

Reading this collection as a first generation immigrant from Malaysia (as is Chin), I was pleasantly surprised by the synergy of our experiences as I paged through the pieces. Chin's style is raw yet sincere; a titillation of all the senses. From the sterile scent of Dettol, the taste of spicy and MSG-saturated Chinese restaurant food, to familiar alliterations of "Manglish/Singlish", Chin at times teases us with love/hate sentimentalities, and at others, unapologetically shoves the practices and nuances of his desires down our throats. The book's cover and binding fail to stem issues of sexuality, home, memory, colonialism, betrayal, obsession, race, nationality, envy, and beauty from flooding out from the pages. All this is rolled compactly like a layered piece of candy, demanding that you not suck on it, but to BITE HARD! Take it all or spit him out. He demands no compromise.

I just wanted to comment on the book. I thought it was very good. Justin Chin writes very well and his images are so brilliant. "Bitterness comes as revolution, cyclic, a snake biting its tail scales, a

dog nipping its tail hairs, bitter, continuity achieved by subtlety, perceptions played out, questions followed by answers, ask, answer, some days you will know..."

Wow - I loved it...I'd first seen Chin perform in San Francisco and this book is just as dangerous - it challenged my own comfort levels and at the same time left me in hysterics. These are real experiences I could relate to. Thanks!

You kept me awake and happy

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