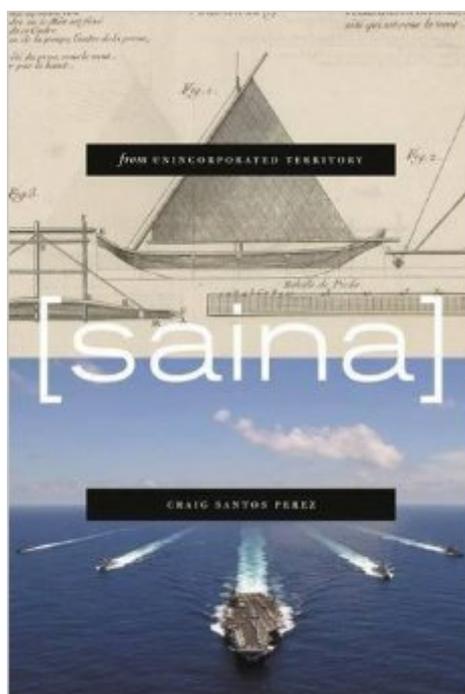


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# From Unincorporated Territory [saina]



## Synopsis

With the Saina as his figurative vessel—a ship built in modern times as an exact replica of the swift outriggers designed and sailed by the Chamorro people until banned by their oppressors—Craig Santos Perez deftly navigates the complexities in his bracing exploration of the personal, historical, cultural, and natural elements of his native Guam and its people. As the title—from unincorporated territory [saina]—suggests, by understanding where we are from, we can best determine where we are going. Perez collages primary texts and oral histories of the colonial domination and abuse brought by the Spanish, the Japanese, the United States, and the capitalist entertainment/travel industry, with intimate stories of his childhood experiences on Guam, his family's immigration to the US, and the evocatively fragmentary myths of his ancestors. Resonant too in Perez's title, and throughout this work, is this poet's evocation of the unincorporated and unfathomed elements of our natures, as he seeks the means to access an expansiveness that remains inexpressible in any language. Perez is not afraid to press language beyond the territories of the known as he investigates both the anguish and the possibilities that horizon as one attempts to communicate the spoken and unspoken languages of one's native people, while fully appreciating the suffering inherent in every word he will use that is pronounced in, and thus pronounces, the language of their oppressors.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This book was a requirement for a Globality and Literature class. Normally I find that we are made

to read literature for such classes more for its commentary on post-colonialism than for its artistic ingenuity. Happily that is not the case with this book! Perez does use an unconventional form in his poetry, unconventional that is, if the only post-WWI poetry you've read was off Hallmark greeting cards. If intentional whitespace, crossed-out paragraphs, excerpts from travel guides, UN testimonies, and legal documents sounds scary, then this might not be your cup of tea. And that's not mentioning that it's actually written in a mix of four languages, English, Spanish, Japanese, and Chamorro (though English is all you really \*need\* to know). So many post-colonial writers feel the need to beat the reader over the head with their oppression, making sure the reader knows that white European/Americans are the problem. Perez never takes that tone, and is never really accusatory. He mixes in a lot of data, though he does it in a lyrical way that doesn't feel like reading reams of statistics. He paints a beautiful-but-troubling picture of Guam and life in Oceania. He is proud of his heritage, but is quick to point out where his people could have done a better job of protecting their culture. Speaking from a strictly poetical standpoint, Perez really throws all he has at the experimental forms he uses. There are six basic "types" that Perez creates in the book, each approaching things with a unique form, theme, and perspective. Perez rolls through these forms as needed, putting ten poems in a chapter, in a book of five chapters. Many are one page and quite a few go on for longer than that. This is clearly meant to be read as a book, and not as individual poems.

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