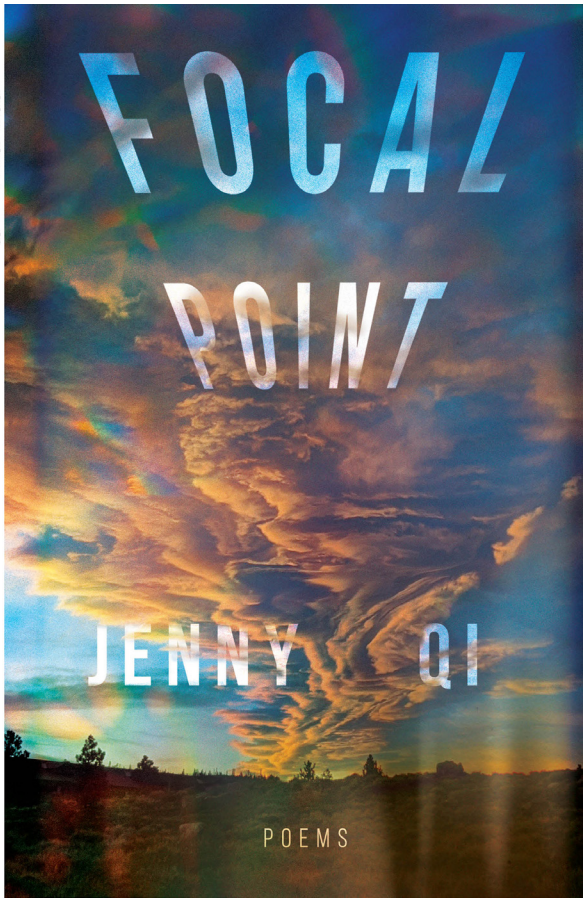
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STEEL TOE BOOKS
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RELEASE DATE October 13, 2021

WINNER STEEL TOE BOOKS POETRY PRIZE
Focal Point by Jenny Qi

Paperback/Poetry
$16.00/98 pp./5.5x8.5in
ISBN 978-1-949540-26-0



"These poems confidently, curiously, sorrowfully, optimistically, reveal a singular, exciting new voice in American poetry."
— Matthew Zapruder, author of *Why Poetry* and *Father's Day*

"*Focal Point* is a book of losses: loss of innocence and loss of illusion, the loss of friends and lovers, but most of all the loss of a mother.... Qi's poems take us deep inside both her own grief and the limits of scientific knowledge to produce poems that, though plain-spoken, plumb a multitude of complex, unsettling emotions.... These are poems that express the profound paradox of slowly healing from wounds you know you'll never truly heal."
— Paisley Rekdal, author of *Nightingale*

Winner of the 2020 Steel Toe Books Poetry Award, **FOCAL POINT by Jenny Qi (Steel Toe Books, October 13, 2021)** is a scientist's unofficial dissertation, a daughter's faithful correspondence, and a coming-of-age story. Written largely while Qi was a young Ph.D. student conducting cancer research after losing her mother to cancer of another kind, the collection turns to "all the rituals of all the faiths," invoking Western and Eastern mythology and history, metaphors from cell biology, and even Jimi Hendrix. Loss fills the crevices of this collection as poems reflect and turn a kaleidoscopic eye on illness, early relationships, racism, climate change, mass shootings, the COVID-19 pandemic, and more—but not without hope or faith. In the face of grief, **FOCAL POINT** is an uncompromising interrogation of how to be alive in the world, always loving something that has been—or will be—lost. Called **"a beautiful and reflective book that inhabits the necessary liminal space of betweenness"** (Victoria Chang, *Obit*), Qi's debut is as brave and unflinching as it is tender.

Praise for Focal Point

"It's not often a poet arrives on the scene with her "voice" not just already intact, but richly developed. From the moment I first read a poem of hers I recognized a secure handling of language, a clear process of thought, and a clever use of poetic craft that together provided a fresh and uniquely authentic point of view.... *Focal Point* is a blossom opening."
— David Watts, author of *Having and Keeping*

"The poems in Jenny Qi's haunting debut collection, *Focal Point*, are delicate the way a scalpel is delicate. A fine instrument is needed to carve into a reader the precise shape of loss, and Qi accomplishes this feat again and again in elegies for a cherished mother, for girlhood, for belonging, for lovers, and for the earth itself.... Jenny Qi's poems tenderly, gorgeously grapple with what it is to be human, to be 'magnificent things / flailing in the whistling / April wind.'"
— Francesca Bell, author of *Bright Stain*

"*Focal Point* by Jenny Qi is a book of crossing.... Qi grapples with disorder and order at once, endings and beginnings, mapping out a place where both co-exist because they have to. *Focal Point* is a beautiful and reflective book that inhabits the necessary liminal space of betweenness."
— Victoria Chang, author of *Obit*

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About Jenny Qi

Jenny Qi is the author of the debut poetry collection *Focal Point*, winner of the 2020 Steel Toe Books Poetry Award. Her essays and poems have been published widely in newspapers and literary journals, including *The New York Times*, *The Atlantic*, and the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and she has received fellowships from Tin House, Omnidawn, Kearny Street Workshop, and the San Francisco Writers Grotto. Born in Pennsylvania to Chinese immigrants, she grew up mostly in Las Vegas and Nashville and now resides in San Francisco, where she completed her Ph.D. in Cancer Biology and currently works in oncology consulting. At the end of graduate school, she co-founded and produced the science storytelling podcast Bone Lab Radio, where she wrote and talked a lot about death. She is working on more essays and poems and translating her late mother's memoirs of the Chinese Cultural Revolution and immigration to the U.S.

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