

by Kao  
Kalia Yang

## *The Song Poet: A Memoir of My Father*

In the Hmong tradition, the song poet recounts the story of his people — their history and tragedies and their joys and losses. By drawing on folk tales, he keeps the past alive; invokes the spirits and the homeland; and records courtships, births, weddings and wishes.

In *The Song Poet: A Memoir of My Father*, Kao Kalia Yang recounts the life story of her father, Bee Yang, a Hmong refugee in Minnesota who was driven from the mountains of Laos by America's Secret War. Bee lost his father as a young boy in war-torn Laos and deeply felt his displacement as an orphan. He would wander from one neighbor to the next, collecting the things they said to each other and whispering the words to himself at night until one day, a song was born. Bee sang the life of his people through the war-torn jungle and a Thai refugee

camp for nearly a decade. But the songs fall away in the cold, bitter world of a Minneapolis housing project and on the factory floor until, with the death of Bee's mother, the songs leave him for good. But before they do, Bee's poetry enriched the lives of his children despite the grim reality of their life of poverty.

*The Song Poet* is about art, resilience and the opportunities and indignities that come with life in a new country. Yang, a Minnesota resident, dealt with some of these same subjects in her award-winning book *The Latecomer: A Hmong Family Memoir*. Written in perfectly paced chapters with the exquisite beauty for which Kao Kalia Yang is renowned, *The Song Poet* is a love story of a daughter for her father; a father for his children; and a people for their land, their traditions, and all that they have lost.



**Now in its ninth year,** OneBook, OneLakeville promotes family reading, literacy and community interaction by encouraging everyone to read the same book.

### **OneBook, OneLakeville**

is made possible by the Dakota County Library—Heritage, Friends of the Heritage Library, the City of Lakeville, and the many sponsors listed below. This project was funded in part with money from Minnesota's Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund.

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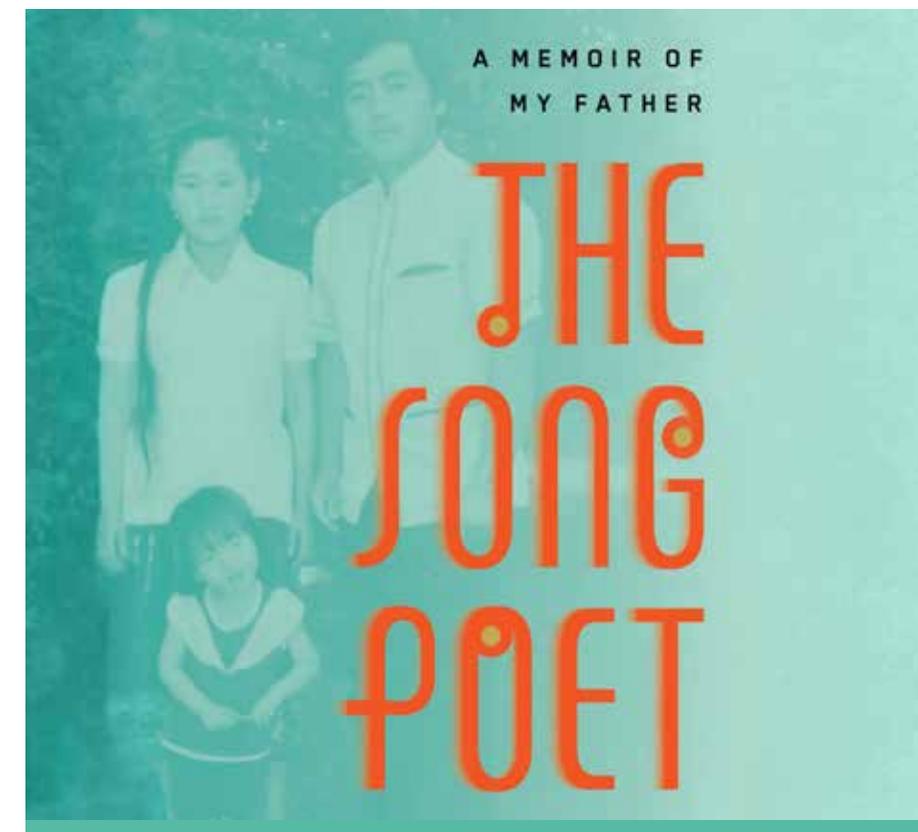
### **Dakota County Library—Heritage**

20085 Heritage Drive  
Lakeville  
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## **ONE BOOK, ONE LAKEVILLE**

*April 4–June 1, 2017*

Join us for special events during our community celebration of this very special book.



### *The Song Poet* *A Memoir of My Father*

by  
Kao Kalia  
Yang

Presented by the Dakota County Library—Heritage, Friends of the Heritage Library and the City of Lakeville



# Meet Author Kao Kalia Yang at the Lakeville Area Arts Center

Spend an evening with Kao Kalia Yang, author of *The Song Poet: A Memoir of My Father*, and hear the mesmerizing true story of a man who kept the past and the Hmong culture alive for his children and helped them work towards the American dream.

The Iny Asian Dance Theater will entertain the audience with Hmong-style dances.

This celebration of books and reading includes refreshments.

Free tickets are required and available at [www.lakevillemn.gov](http://www.lakevillemn.gov), search *Kao Kalia Yang*.

**Sat, April 29, 7-9 pm**

Lakeville Area Arts Center  
20965 Holyoke Ave.  
Lakeville



## Join us April 4–June 1

for events that celebrate Kao Kalia Yang's *The Song Poet: A Memoir of My Father*.

### From Laos to the U.S.

Learn about the legacy and heritage of the Hmong culture as it relates to Kao Kalia Yang's *The Song Poet* from Professor Lee Pao Xiong, Director of the Center for Hmong Studies at Concordia University. Bonded by tradition, the Hmong are a powerful byproduct of global interactions and international relations.

**Tue, April 4, 7-8 pm**  
Heritage Library

### Family Day

Join the Friends of the Heritage Library in celebrating Hmong culture through games, stories and simple art projects geared for all ages.

**Sat, April 8, 10:30-noon**  
Heritage Library

### The Hmong Family Kitchen and Garden

Discover the nutritious and medicinal value of foods from Zongxee Lee of Mhonpaj's Garden, a Certified Organic Farm and the first Hmong-owned organic Community Supported Agriculture farm in Minnesota. Lee will discuss some less common vegetables seen at local farmer's markets and demonstrate how to use them.

**Tue, April 18, 6:30-8 pm**  
Heritage Library

### Hmong Storytime

Enjoy stories from the Hmong tradition and make a related craft. Geared for ages 5 and older.

**Wed, April 19, 4-5 pm**  
Heritage Library

### Through the Eyes of a Refugee: Hmong Storytelling

Hear Hmong storyteller and artist Tou Ger Xiong describe his experiences in the jungles of Laos, the refugee camps of Thailand and the public housing projects of America using humor, folk tales and spoken word in this high-energy, engaging event for all ages.

**Mon, April 24, 7-8 pm**  
Heritage Library

### Discussion Groups

Read *The Song Poet: A Memoir of My Father* by Kao Kalia Yang and join others in discussing the book.

**Tue, May 2, 10-11 am**  
Lakeville Heritage Center  
20110 Holyoke Ave.

**Wed, May 31, 7-8 pm**  
Heritage Library

**Thu, June 1, 12:30-1:30 pm**  
Heritage Library



## About the author

Kao Kalia Yang is a graduate of Carleton College and earned her Master of Fine Arts degree in Creative Nonfiction at Columbia University. She is the co-founder of *Words Wanted*, an agency dedicated to helping immigrants with writing, translating and business services. She lives in Minneapolis with her family. Born in Thailand's Ban Vinai Refugee Camp, Yang is a member of the Hmong ethnic minority and is now an American citizen.

*The Latehomecomer* was Kalia's first published book. She also wrote, "The Place Where We Were Born," a film documenting the experiences of Hmong American refugees, and is working on creative nonfiction books for children.