Can Xue—whose pseudonym in Chinese means both the dirty snow that refuses to melt and the purest snow at the top of a high mountain—was born in 1953 in Changsha City, Hunan Province, in South China. She lived in Changsha until 2001, when she and her husband moved to Beijing. In 1957, her father, an editorial director at the New Hunan Daily News, was condemned as an Ultra-Rightist and was sent to reform through labor, and her mother, who worked at the same newspaper, was sent to the countryside for labor as well. Because of the family catastrophe during the Cultural Revolution, Can Xue lost her chance for further education and only graduated from elementary school. Largely self-taught, Can Xue has studied reading and writing in English for years, and she has read extensively English texts of literature.

Regarded as one of the most experimental writers in the world by some literary scholars and readers—Susan Sontag once reflected, “If China has one possibility of a Nobel laureate it is Can Xue”—Can Xue describes her works as “soul literature” or “life literature.” She is the author of numerous short-story collections and four novels. Six of her works have been published in English, including Dialogues in Paradise (Northwestern University Press, 1989), Old Floating Cloud: Two Novellas (Northwestern University Press, 1991), The Embroidered Shoes (Henry Holt, 1997), Blue Light in the Sky and Other Stories (New Directions, 2006), Five Spice Street (Yale University Press, 2009). Vertical Motion (2011) and most recently, Frontier (2016) have been translated into English by University at Rochester’s Open Letter Press. A novel and a commentary book on Kafka are forthcoming from Yale University Press. She has also published books of commentary on Borges, Shakespeare, Dante, Goethe, Italo Calvino, and Bruno Schulz. She claims that all of her works are from the experiments in which she takes herself as the subject.

AMELIA GRAY
Thursday November 3
WNYBAC
468 Washington St, Buffalo, NY
7:00pm - 8:00pm

AMELIA GRAY is the author of four books: AM/PM, Museum of the Weird, THREATS, and Gutshot. Her fiction and essays have appeared in The New Yorker, The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, Tin House, and VICE. She is winner of the NYPL Young Lion’s Award, of FC2’s Ronald Sukenick Innovative Fiction Prize, and a finalist for the PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction. She lives in Los Angeles.

Gary Lutz reflects: “Call them what you must—stories, fables, parables, nanonovels of melancholized hilarity—but Amelia Gray’s super-concentrated, hyper-velocitous prose marvelments do what so few fictions even attempt: leave you gasping from one unsettling moment to the next.”

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All events are Free and Open to the Public