



The Institute for
Korean Studies
presents:

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**"Transhistorical Mourning in Korean
Diasporic Poetry: Don Mee Choi's DMZ
Colony"**

Abstract: Taking a transtemporal and transpacific approach, this paper examines Korean American poet Don Mee Choi's DMZ Colony (National Book Award winner, 2020) in relation to leading contemporary Korean poet Kim Hyesoon's Chugŏmŏi chasajŏn (Autobiography of Death, 2016). I analyze Kim Hyesoon's book as a 21st century form of muga, songs traditionally sung by female shamans to help the souls of the dead enter the afterlife. In the rite for the dead that Kim creates for those who perished in the 2014 Sewol Ferry disaster, Kim's polyvocal speaker engages the embodied memory of individuals to voice the transhistorical grief of the Korean community. The paper contends that the grief Kim conveys extends to the Korean diaspora and interprets DMZ Colony as a (post)colonial lament that draws on the oral tradition to articulate collective mourning across the Pacific.

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3:55-5:15pm

Mendenhall Lab 191

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