

Arctic Ocean

Atlantic Ocean

Pacific Ocean

**Vietnam**

OnTheWorldMap.com

Indian Ocean

Atlantic Ocean

Southern Ocean

Pacific Ocean



## Essay on Craft

*By Ocean Vuong (a Vietnamese-American poet)*

Because the butterfly's yellow wing  
flickering in black mud  
was a word  
stranded by its language.  
Because no one else  
was coming — & I ran  
out of reasons.  
So I gathered fistfuls  
of ash, dark as ink,  
hammered them  
into marrow, into  
a skull thick  
enough to keep  
the gentle curse  
of dreams. Yes, I aimed  
for mercy —  
but came only close  
as building a cage

around the heart. Shutters  
over the eyes. Yes,  
I gave it hands  
despite knowing  
that to stretch that clay slab  
into five blades of light,  
I would go  
too far. Because I, too,  
needed a place  
to hold me. So I dipped  
my fingers back  
into the fire, pried open  
the lower face  
until the wound widened  
into a throat,  
until every leaf shook silver  
with that god  
-awful scream  
& I was done.  
& it was human.

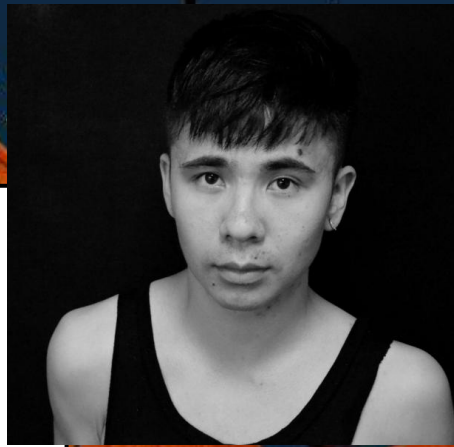




# Ocean Vuong

## About the poet

- Born in Hồ Chí Minh City in Vietnam, in 1988
- Moved to Connecticut in the United States during childhood
- Achieved a degree in English and a Masters degree in poetry in New York
- Has published two poetry books and one novel



## About the poem

- How do you feel after reading it?
- Which lines or words resonated with you and why?
- What would you say the main theme of this poem is?