



# The Secret of Hoa Sen

*Nguyen Phan Que Mai*

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**The Secret of Hoa Sen** Nguyen Phan Que Mai

**Poems by Nguyen Phan Que Mai**

**Translated from the Vietnamese by Bruce Weigl and Nguyen Phan Que Mai**

Nguyen Phan Que Mai is among the most exciting writers to emerge from post-war Vietnam. Bruce Weigl, driven by his personal experiences as a soldier during the war in Vietnam, has spent the past 20 years translating contemporary Vietnamese poetry. These penetrating poems, published in bilingual English and Vietnamese, build new bridges between two cultures bound together by war and destruction. *The Secret of Hoa Sen*, Que Mai's first full-length U.S. publication, shines with craft, art, and deeply felt humanity.

*I cross the Lam River to return to my homeland  
where my mother embraces my grandmother's tomb in the rain,  
the soil of Nghe An so dry the rice plants cling to rocks.  
My mother chews dry corn; hungry, she tries to forget.*

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