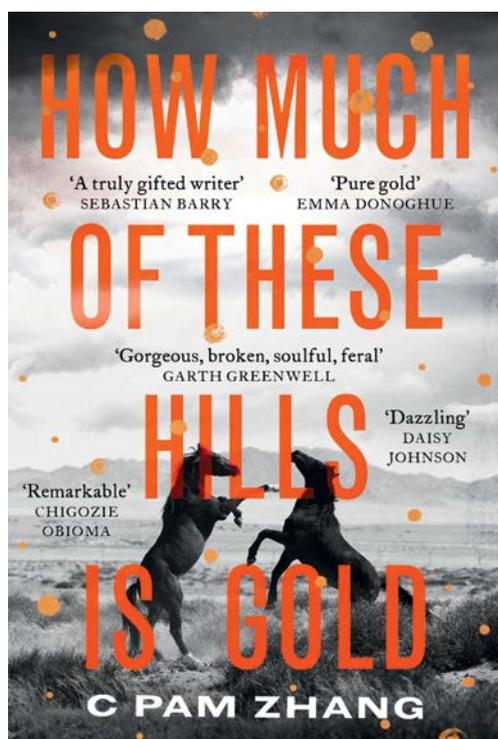




Readers' Guide



How Much of These Hills Is Gold

C Pam Zhang

Virago

thebookerprizes.com

About the author

C Pam Zhang was born in Beijing in January 1990, but is mostly an artefact of the United States. She has lived in 13 cities and is still looking for home. She's been awarded fellowships and scholarships from organisations including Bread Loaf, Tin House, Aspen Words and the Iowa Writers' Workshop. Her work appears in *Kenyon Review*, *McSweeney's Quarterly*, *Tin House* and elsewhere. *How Much of These Hills is Gold* is her debut novel. She currently lives in San Francisco.

About the book

How Much of These Hills is Gold tells an untold story of the arrival of Chinese-American immigrants to the US during the Gold Rush. It's a novel about conflict between two siblings, carrying the body of their newly deceased father across a harsh landscape.

Set during the Gold Rush, in a re-imagined American West, Lucy and Sam, 12 and 11, are newly orphaned siblings. With their father's body on their backs, they roam an unforgiving landscape dotted with buffalo bones and tiger paw prints, searching for a place to give him a proper burial. The siblings must battle with their own memories, the illusion of the American Dream and each other.

What the judges said

'The haunting and heartbreaking story of two immigrant children coping alone amid the fading leftovers of the Gold Rush in nineteenth century California.'

Discussion points

How is traditional imagery of the Wild West used within the novel?

How Much of These Hills is Gold tells the story of the American West through the eyes of an immigrant family. Do you think there are learnings that can be taken from this book that apply to today?

How do the characters deal with the trauma they experience?

What role does gender play throughout the novel?

Themed reading

As I Lay Dying by William Faulkner

The Grapes of Wrath by John Steinbeck

The Luminaries by Eleanor Catton

West by Carys Davies

Inland by Téa Obreht

Useful links

<https://cpamzhang.com/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2020/mar/29/how-much-of-these-hills-is-gold-c-pam-zhang-review>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/07/books/review/how-much-of-these-hills-is-gold-c-pam-zhang.html>

<https://bombmagazine.org/articles/c-pam-zhang/>

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