

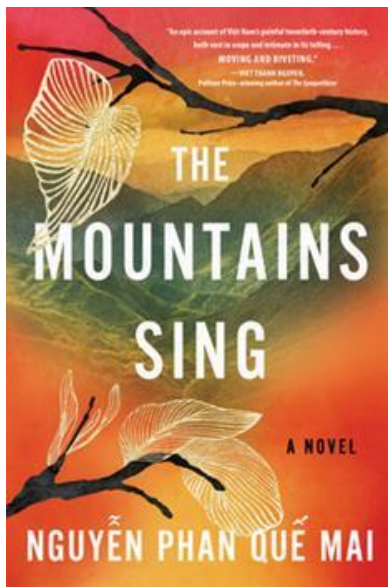
Post Colonial Lit, Level 4 (W239534)

The Mountains Sing, Nguyen Phan Que Mai

ISBN-13: 9781616208189

“This absorbing, stirring novel takes as its guiding principle what history might look like when written from people’s memories rather than enshrined in textbooks that silence or distort the truth.”

- Gaiutra Bahadur, *The New York Times*



The Mountains Sing tells an enveloping, multi-generational tale of the Tran family, set against the backdrop of the Việt Nam War. Tran Dieu Lan, who was born in 1920, was forced to flee her family farm with her six children during the Land Reform as the Communist government rose in the North. Years later in Hà Nội, her young granddaughter, **Hương**, comes of age as her parents and uncles head off down the Ho Chí Minh Trail to fight in a conflict that will tear not just her beloved country but her family apart.

Vivid, gripping, and steeped in the language and traditions of Việt Nam, *The Mountains Sing* brings to life the human costs of this conflict from the point of view of the Vietnamese people themselves, while showing us the true power of kindness and hope. This is celebrated Vietnamese poet Nguyen Phan Que Mai’s first novel in English.

In the book, the grandmother, Dieu Lan, explains, “we’re forbidden to talk about events that relate to past mistakes or the wrongdoing of those in power, for they give themselves the right to rewrite history, but history will write itself in people’s memories, and as long as those memories live on, we can have faith that we can do better.”

As you read, annotate for passages that respond to the following questions:



1. What was the cost of the Việt Nam War for the Vietnamese? How did the Việt Nam War impact Vietnamese culture, landscape, economy, politics, and family?
2. How does the author challenge a textbook history of the Việt Nam War? What events and truths does she seek to preserve from the Vietnamese perspective?
3. How does this novel celebrate the hope and resilience of the Vietnamese people?