

EXTRAVAGANT CAMP

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# EXTRAVAGANT CAMP

THE QUEER ABJECTION OF ASIAN AMERICA

**CHRIS A. ENG**



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*For Damien, and our Tempura*



It's through the drag performers' explosive outfits and gestures, their overdrawn faces and voices, their tabooed trespass of gender, that this relief, through extravagant spectacle, is manifest. As much as they are useful, paid, and empowered as a vital service in a society where to be queer is still a sin, the drag queens are, for as long as the dead lie in the open, an othered performance. Their presumed, reliable fraudulence is what makes their presence, to the mourners, necessary. Because grief, at its worst, is unreal. And it calls for a surreal response. The queens—in this way—are unicorns.

Unicorns stamping in a graveyard.

—Ocean Vuong, *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous*

