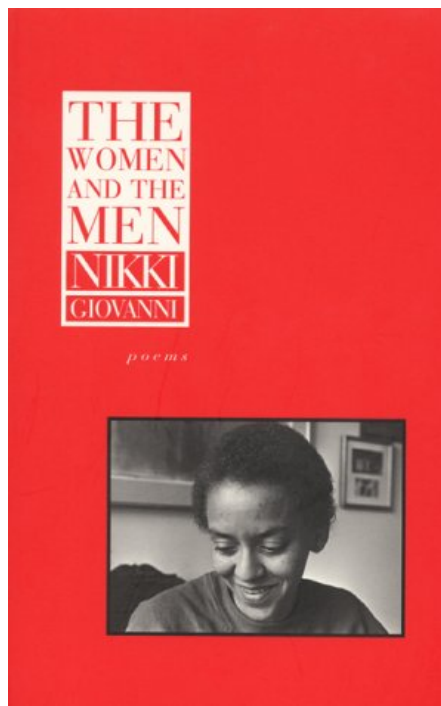




The Women and the Men

Nikki Giovanni

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From Harlem rooftops to the drumbeats of the Congo, the poems in *The Women and the Men* display in full measure the gifts that have made Nikki Giovanni one of the most important, appealing, and broad-reaching American poets: her warmth, her conciseness, her passion, and her wit. First appearing between 1970 and 1975, the poems in this gemlike volume reflect the drastic change that took place--in both the consciousness of the nation and in the soul of the poet. From "Ego Tripping" to "Poem for Flora" and "Africa," *The Women and the Men* is replete with the greatest hits of Nikki Giovanni's incredible oeuvre. With reverence to the ordinary and in search of the extraordinary, Nikki Giovanni, above all, displays here her caring for the people, things, and places she has observed and touched and captured.

As a witness to three generations, Nikki Giovanni has perceptively and poetically recorded her observations of both the outside world and the gentle yet enigmatic territory of the self. When her poems first emerged from the Black Rights Movement in the late 1960's, she immediately became a celebrated and controversial poet of the era. Written in one of the most commanding voices to grace America's political and poetic landscape at the end of the twentieth century, Nikki Giovanni's poems embody the fearless passion and spirited wit for which she is beloved and revered.

The Women and the Men Details

Date : Published January 1st 1979 by Harper Perennial (first published January 1st 1975)

ISBN : 9780688079475

Author : Nikki Giovanni

Format : Paperback

Genre : Poetry, Cultural, African American

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From Reader Review The Women and the Men for online ebook

Emily says

It took me a bit to get into her style, but I enjoyed the poems and there are bits of them that really struck me as true and beautiful--even if the truth was not so beautiful, the way it was written was. I connected with this more than I expected to, and one that stood out to me was "Housecleaning."

Susan Rose says

This is a beautiful book of free form poetry, I found the poems best read out loud as they are like spoken word, or lyrics. The strong plain but beautifully constructed poems remind me of Langston Hughes.

Some themes in this collection are, music, nature of fame and gender roles. Another strength of this collection is its great economy of language. A quick example is :

The Autumn Poems

the heat
you left with me
last night
still smolders
the wind catches
your scent
and refreshes
my senses

i am a leaf
falling from your tree
upon which i was
impaled

Coles says

Giovanni is my favorite poet and any book of hers that I can add to my shelves is a prayer answered.

Jen says

Revolutionary Dreams and Kidnap Poem are two great poems from this collection. Nikki Giovanni is still writing poetry and teaches at Virginia Tech.

Jerald says

I connected with this sooo much more than I expected to...and it's not at all because I had low expectations, but because I just happened across this title while shelving at work. I'd simply never read any of Nikki Giovanni's work up until now. I'm SO glad that I grabbed it and placed it on my cart because the experience I just had reading this solitary book, I'm sure, was and will be for years to come, very significant in my life.

Maughn Gregory says

there are no reservations
for the revolution

no polite little clerk
to send notice
to your room
saying you are WANTED
on the battlefield ...

there will be no recruitment
station
where you can give
the most convenient hours
"monday wednesday i play ball
friday night i play cards
any other time i'm free"

This second book of Giovanni's poetry is full of important observations on fighting hate with love (a marked shift from her first book), while continuing the passionate struggle for justice.

Drew says

Some of the poems in "The Women" section are lovely and have a swinging ease about them, even as they take on heavy topics. But the poems in "The Men" section made me cringe whenever Giovanni waxed romantic mush. The final section ("And Some Places") is better but the "old lady" wisdom rings false -- which makes sense: Giovanni was only 30-something at the time of publication.

Herman brown says

gentle... yet concise.

R.K. Cowles says

3 1/4 stars

Jenny (Reading Envy) says

I went on a Nikki Giovanni poetry reading binge because she will be at the SC Book Festival in May 2014.

Anyone who has read Nikki Giovanni's more recent love poem anthologies - Love Poems and Bicycles - will find that many of the poems chosen for those volumes come from this one.

I think I may prefer them this way, presented in groupings of poems on women and poems on men, which adds more balance to the "love" part of life. Taken by itself, it can be a bit... sappy, shall we say. But always heartfelt, always true.

My favorite poem is the opposite of sappy, called Housecleaning, which can be listened to on the Smithsonian Folkways website, read by the poet.

Housecleaning

i always liked housecleaning
even as a child
i dug straightening
the cabinets
putting new paper on
the shelves
washing the refrigerator
inside out
and unfortunately this habit has
carried over and i find
i must remove you
from my life

Sarah says

Giovanni writes with confidence and assurance. Her poems are like exclamation marks. No doubt, no argument, no discussion. She encapsulates her world, her experience, her truths, and serves them up without apology or contextualization. Her words are bold and inspirational.

The Women Gather

the women gather
because it is not unusual
to seek comfort in our hours of stress
a man must be buried

it is not unusual

that the old bury the young
though it is an abomination

it is not strange
that the unwise and the ungentle
carry the banner of humaneness
though it is a castration of the spirit

it no longer shatters the intellect
that those who make war
call themselves diplomats

we are no longer surprised
that the unfaithful pray loudest
every sunday in every church
and sometimes in rooms facing east
though it is a sin and a shame

so how do we judge a man

most of us love from our need to love not
because we find someone deserving

most of us forgive because we have trespassed not
because we are magnanimous

most of us comfort because we need comforting
our ancient rituals demand that we give
what we hope to receive

and how do we judge a man

we learn to greet when meeting
to cry when parting
and to soften our words at times of stress

the women gather
with cloth and ointment
their busy hands bowing to laws that decree
willows shall stand swaying but unbroken
against even the determined wind of death

we judge a man by his dreams
not alone his deeds
we judge a man by his intent
not alone his shortcomings
we judge a man because it is not unusual
to know him through those who love him

the women gather strangers
to each other because
they have loved a man

it is not unusual to sift
through ashes
and find an unburnt picture

Hope L. Justice says

I didn't find the style or language to be exceptional as a majority. I think they were some that really shined, purely easy beauty. "alone" is really lovely:

i can be
alone by myself
i was
lonely alone
now i'm lonely
with you
something is wrong
there are flies
everywhere
i go

I think as a whole, the form is tiresome and within poems there are a lot of clashing images--thematically schizophrenic in some places. I really enjoyed this read however.

3.5

Brendan says

Poetry about being black in America, romance, aging, and family. Three sections: *The Women*, *The Men*, *And Some Places*. The middle section didn't really do anything for me.

My favorites:
"Poetry"
"Poem for Aretha"

I am so hip even my errors are correct
- "Ego Tripping"

*it is not unusual to sift
through ashes
and find an unburnt picture*
- "The Women Gather"

LALa says

I never know what to say about collections of poetry. I enjoyed a great number of the pieces in this one. It's easy to skim social media and come across so much cliché/bad or boring poetry (myself included at times I'm

sure) that one might forget what good poetry looks/sounds like. I am thankful for this refreshing reminder and plan to read more of Giovanni's work.

Karen Ashmore says

There is no better poem than "Ego Tripping", especially when read out loud full of drama and emotion.
