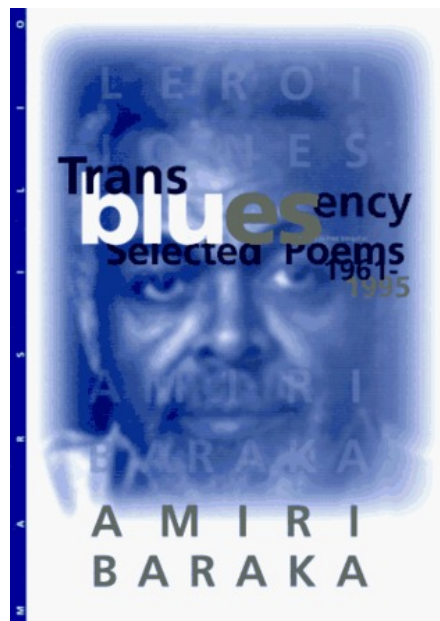




Transbluesency: Selected Poems, 1961-1995

Amiri Baraka , Paul Vangelisti (Editor)

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Finally in print in a single volume, a selection from Baraka's mostly out-of-print collections of poetry, from 1961 to the present. Starting with *Preface to a Twenty Volume Suicide Note* and concluding with recent limited-edition chapbooks and broadsides, this selection traces the more than thirty year career of a major writer who - along with Ezra Pound - may be one of the most significant, and least understood, American poets of our century.

Edited by noted poet and translator Paul Vangelisti, *Transbluesency* offers an ample selection of works from every period of Baraka's extraordinarily innovative, often controversial struggle as a serious and ideologically committed American artist - from Beat to Black Nationist to Marxist-Leninist. This volume reveals a writer shaping a body of poetry that is well a body of knowledge; a passionate reflection upon the cultural, political, and aesthetic questions of his time.

Transbluesency: Selected Poems, 1961-1995 Details

Date : Published October 1st 1995 by Marsilio Publishers (first published 1995)

ISBN : 9781568860145

Author : Amiri Baraka , Paul Vangelisti (Editor)

Format : Paperback 271 pages

Genre : Poetry, Cultural, African American, The United States Of America

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From Reader Review Transbluesency: Selected Poems, 1961-1995 for online ebook

Corinne says

"Poems are bullshit"

Nathan says

I sure don't read Baraka for the stale socialist rhetoric! He's got stunning poetics.

ps- carolyn got the SFSU library copy signed.

Steve says

I wish I had more time to spend with Baraka. He is insightful, funny, and gorgeous. And for a beat poet, way more refined than Ginsberg or Kerouac. I will be returning to this author.

mwpm says

This selection includes poems from *Preface to a Twenty Volume Suicide Note*, *The Dead Lecturer*, *Black Magic*, *Hard Facts*, *Poetry For The Advanced*, *Reggae Or Not!*, *AM/TRAK*, *In the Tradition*, *HEATHENS*, and *Wise, Why's, Y'z ...*

From *Preface to a Twenty Volume Suicide Note* (1961)...

Lately, I've become accustomed to the way
The ground opens up and envelopes me
Each time I go out to walk the dog.
Or the broad edged silly music the wind
Makes when I run for a bus...

Things have come to that.

And now, each night I count the stars,
And each night I get the same number.
And when they will not come to be counted,
I count the holes they leave.

Nobody sings anymore.

And then last night, I tiptoed up

To my daughter's room and heard her
Talking to someone, and when I opened
The door, there was no one there...
Only she on her knees, peeking into

Her own clasped hands.

- **Preface to a Twenty Volume Suicide Note**, *for Kellie Jones*, pg. 5

From *The Dead Lecturer* (1964)...

Practices
silence, the way of wind
bursting
its early lull. Cold morning
to night, we go so
slowly, without
thought
to ourselves. (Enough
to have thought
tonight, nothing
finishes it. What
you are, will have
no certainty, or
end. That you will
stay, where you are,
a human gentle wisp
of life. Ah...)
practices
loneliness
as a virtue. A single
specious need
to keep
what you have
never really
had..

- **As a Possible Lover**, pg. 53

From *Black Magic* (1969)...

This night's first star, hung
high up over a factory. From my window,
a smile held my poetry in. A tower, where I work

and drink, vomit, and spoil myself casual life.

Looking past things, to their meaning. All the pretensions
of consciousness. Looking out, or in, the precise stare
of painful reference. (Saying to the pretty girl, "Pain
has to be educational.") Or so I thought, riding down

in the capsule, call it elevator lady, speedless forceless
profile thrust toward the modern lamp, in lieu of a natural
sun. Our beings are here. (Take this chance to lick yourself,
the salt and stain of memory history and object.) Shit! Love!

Things we must have some use for. Old niggers in time on the
dreary street. Man, 50 . . . woman, 50, drunk and falling in the street.
I could say, looking at their lot, a poet has just made a note of your
hurt. First star, high over the factory. I could say, if I had any courage

but my own. First star, high over the factory. Get up off the ground, or
just look at it, calmly, where you are.

- **A Poem Welcoming Jonas Mekas to America**, pg. 119

From *Hard Facts* (1972)...

Civil Rights
included Nathan
and the rest
of them, who got in america
big shotting off the agony
a class of blue Bloods, hip
to the swing and sway of
the usa. yeh all the 1st
negroes would wise, joined
knees, and shuffled heroically
into congress, city hall, the
anti-p programs, and a thousand
penetrable traps of cookstove
america. a class of exploiters,
in black face, collaborators,
not puppets, pulling their own
strings, and ours too, in the
poor people's buck dance, w/o
the bux. But see, then later,
you talkin afrika, and its unity
like a giant fist of iron, smashing
"racialism," around the world. But see
that fist, any fist, reared back to
strike an enemy, shd strike the real

enemy. Not a colorless shadow for
black militants in residence, to
bloat the pockets and consolidate
the power of an international
bourgeoisie. In rag time, slanting
stick legs, with a pocket full of
toasted seaweed, and a bibliography
of bitter neocapitalists or bohemian
greys, celebrating life in a dark garage
w/ all cars banned until the voodoo car
appear. The way the rich blackies showed
after we marched and built their material
base, now niggers are left in the middle
of the panafrikan highway, babbling about
eternal racism, and divine white supremacy
a hundred thousand dollar a year oppression
and now the intellectualization, the militant
resource of the new class, its historical
valorization. Between them, john johnson
and elijah, david rockfeller rests his
smiling head.

- **History On Wheels**, pg. 151-152

From *Poetry For The Advanced* (1979)...

Pres
spoke in a language
"of his own." What did he say, between the
horn line
s, poke pie hat
tenor tilted
pres once was a drummer but ave it up cause other dudes
was getting
the foxes
while he packed his tomtoms
"Ding Dong," pres sd, meaning
like a typewriter, its the end
of this
line. "No Eyes," pres wd say, meaning
I didn't cdn't dig it, and what it was was
lame. Pres
had a language
and a life, like,
all his own,
but in the teeming whole of us he lived
toooting on his sidewalk horn
translating frankie trumbauer into

Bird' feathers
Tranes sinewy tracks
the slickster walking through the crowd
surviving on a terrifying wit
its the jungle the jungle the jungle
we living in
and cats like pres cd make it because they were clear they, at least,
had to,
to do anything else.
Save all that comrades, we need it.

- **Pres Spoke in a Language**, pg. 171-

From *Reggae Or Not!* (1981)...

Inside beyond our craziness is reality. People rushing through life
dripping with
funk. Inside beyond our craziness and the lies of phillistines
who never wanted to be anything
but Bootsie
w/ golden curls
and a dress tho they black as tar
beyond our inside, beyond wvo, beyond craziness
dripping with
reality
is the funk
the real fusion of life and life
heart and history
color and motion grim what have you's
beat us eat us send us into flight
on the bottom-ism, up under
way down-ism was down under-ville
feet bottom, everybody put us down
we down
[...]

- **Reggae Or Not!**, pg. 175

From *AM/TRAK* (1979)...

1

Trane,
Trane,

History Love Scream Oh
Trane, Oh
Trane, Oh
Scream History Love
Trane

2

Begin on by a Philly night club
or the basement of a cullut chuhch
walk the bars my man for pay
honk the night lust of money
oh
blow -
scream history love
Rabbit, Cleanhead, Diz
Big Maybelle, Trees in the shining night forest
Oh
blow
love,
history
Alcohol we submit to thee
3x's consume our lives
our livers quiver under yr poison hits
eyes roll back in stupidity
The navy, the lord, n*ggers,
the streets
all converge a shitty symphony
of screams
to come
dazzled invective
Honk Honk Honk, "I am here
to love
it". Let me be fire-mystery
air feeder beauty"
Honk
Oh
scream - Miles
comes.

[...]

- **Am/Trak**, pg. 189-190

From *In the Tradition* (1982)...

Blues walk weeps ragtime

Painting slavery
women laid around
working feverishly for slavemaster romeos
as if in ragtime they spill
their origins like chillers (lost chillen
in the streets to be
telephone to by Huggie
Bear from channel 7, for the White Shadow
given advice on how to hold our homes
together, tambien tu, Chicago Hermano

genius bennygoodman headmaster
philanthropist
romeos -
but must coach
cannot shoot -

hey coah-ch
hey coah-ch
trembling fate wrapped in flags
hey coah-ch
you can hug this
while you at it
hey coah-ch

[...]

- **In the Tradition**, pg. 199-200

From *HEATHENS* (1994)...

1 They Ugly
on purpose!

2 They get high
off Air Raids!

3 They are the oldest
continuous functioning
Serial Killers!

4 They murder
to Explain
Themselves!

5 They think
Humans
are food.

6 They imitate
conversation
are lying

7 They are always naked
and always dirty
the shower & tuxedo
don't help

8 They go to the bathroom
to have a religious
experience

9 They believe everything is better
Dead. And that everything alive
is their enemy.

10 Plus Heathens is armed
and dangerous

- **Heathens**, pg. 213-214

From *Wise, Why's, Y'z* (1995)...

If you ever find
yourself, some where
lost and surrounded
by enemies
who won't let you
speak your own language
who destroy your statues
& instruments, who ban
your omm bomm ba boom
then you are in trouble
deep trouble
they ban your
own boom ba boom
you in deep deep
trouble

humph!

probably take you several hundred years
to get

out!

- Wise 1, pg. 219

Neil says

baraka is so impressive as a poet. he has done plays and operas, received numerous awards, but for me his poetry is so powerful with such an original voice. i really enjoy his personal battle with politics for throughout this 30 year span of his poetry he begins with abstract beat writer to somewhat of a marxist-leninist. he mixes cultural and political dimensions with such poetic innovation. although i deem his very original, he reminds me of ezra pound.

Shila says

40 years of Amiri Baraka! What more can I ask for?

Patrice Jones says

I forced myself to read half of this poetry collection. It was a hard read, and I figured that reading the other half would not make me understand Baraka's poetry any more than I already do. Maybe it was the era in which it was written, or maybe I am just out of touch with the Baraka's life and struggles. At any rate, I will pass on the second half.

Paul says

I find it funny how many of us start off as romantics & become so sullen in our older days. His early works are so elegant, imaginative & beautiful as any of the literary greats I've read. His unapologetic anger seems just but may turn off many readers. His beautiful sorrow turns to perilous anger & I find it interesting. This is the objective I believe. To make your ideas known; to make social commentary relevant in an original & captivating manner. He's truly an American attribute. Long live Baraka!

Oscar says

I have to say that I prefer the poems from *Preface to a Twenty Volume Suicide Note* and *The Dead Lecturer* that set off this collection over Amiri's later poems. With that said, this book is an excellent guide to helping poets see how a poet can change their tone and syntax over time without losing their voice or aesthetic. For an extra challenge-- pair this volume up with *Conversations With Amiri Baraka* (Literary Conversations Series) to really feel the growth of one of our premiere poets.
