

FROM  
THE NEW  
WORLD

POEMS 1976-2014

JORIE  
GRAHAM

WINNER OF THE PULITZER PRIZE

## From the New World: Poems 1976-2012

*Jorie Graham*

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# From the New World: Poems 1976-2012

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## From the New World: Poems 1976-2012 Jorie Graham

An indispensable volume of poems, selected from almost four decades of work, that tracks the evolution of one of our most renowned contemporary poets, Pulitzer Prize-winner Jorie Graham.

The Poetry Foundation has named Jorie Graham “one of the most celebrated poets of the American post-war generation.” In 1996, her volume of poetry selected from her first five books, *Dream of a Unified Field*, won the Pulitzer Prize. Now, twenty years later, Graham returns with a new selection, this time from eleven volumes, including previously unpublished work, which, in its breathtaking overview, illuminates of the development of her remarkable poetry thus far.

In *From the New World—Poems 1976-2014*, we can witness the unfolding of Graham’s signature ethical and eco-political concerns, as well as her deft exploration of mythology, history, love and, increasingly, love of the world in a time of crisis. As the work evolves, the depth of compassion grows—gradually transforming, widening and expanding her extraordinary formal resources and her inimitable style.

These pages present a brilliant portrait one of the major voices of American contemporary poetry. As critic Calvin Bedient says, “If Graham has proved oversized as a poet in the field of contemporary poetry, it is because she continually recalls the great Western tradition of philosophical and religious inquiry . . . tenaciously thinking and feeling her way through layer after layer of perception, like no poet before her.”

## From the New World: Poems 1976-2012 Details

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## **From Reader Review From the New World: Poems 1976-2012 for online ebook**

### **Carolyn Hembree says**

It's a gorgeous book -- I mean just as an object -- for one thing and the selections well chosen from four decades of writing. I'm not \*as\* in love with the new poems . . . something a bit deliberate, overly particular you can see coalesce in the final lines of these. Still, it's Jorie Graham: they're damn good, particularly digging "Double Helix." Now, to the collection as a whole, some of these poems are as good as any contemporary poetry I've read, period. "Le Manteau de Pascal" and "The Dream of the Unified Field," for example.

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### **Barry Wightman says**

A favorite poet...a book to return to again and again...

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### **Cone says**

Pay close attention and do not rush, and Jorie Graham's best poems will open a door to epiphanies regarding the workings of consciousness and subjectivity.

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### **Matt says**

A nice representative sample of Graham's work, though it seems like some of her more formally and philosophically inventive poems have been neglected in favor of those that make her appear to conform to the American romantic tradition.

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### **Joe Nasta says**

Necessary, groundbreaking, form-breaking, mind-changing. Each poem requires commitment, but that commitment is rewarded with revelation and awe.

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### **Ted Morgan says**

For me, Ms. Graham is a body of literature from her own country. The amount of her work overwhelms me but I return to savor more of her many landscapes. I understand some of the controversy around her work but the work holds. A remarkable artist who defines herself in her own way, Ms. Graham is rich. This a book to hold close and to explore again and again.

Her work is hard for me to read. She is a difficult poet for me.

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### **Erin Watson says**

Beautiful, intelligent, and heartful. Graham masterfully dances with language, coaxing every syllable into a carefully wrought semblance of poetic balance.

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### **Jeff says**

There's a lovely echo right at the opening of "I Watched a Snake," from Jorie Graham's second volume of poems, *Erosion*, that I didn't hear until I read it aloud this morning. The title "reads" into the poem's first sentence, so that, for this busy reader, at least, the temptation is to read the first sentence *as* a sentence, despite the lattice-work lines that hemi-stitch at essentially tetrameter and dimeter in six line stanzas. The sentence goes as follows: "I watched a snake hard at work in the dry grass behind the house catching flies." Here it is lineated: "I Watched a Snake || hard at work in the dry grass | behind the house | catching flies." I don't start hearing the lines as lines until a medial caesura: The line continues: "It kept on | disappearing. | And though I know this has | something to do || with lust, today it seemed | to have to do | with work." By the end of this passage, I'm focused in my recitation on the way sentences stop periodically, sometimes mid-line, to follow a narrow of emotion -- this, just precisely because the line offers us a bit of imaginative control in language's associative power.

My very private association here was with Williams' dramatic monologue for his mother, "Widow's Lament in Springtime," where the widow walks unanswerably amid the flowers shared for "Thirty-five years | I lived with my husband." Those years have a different resonance, so a different line, when the love is mere magical thought. "[b]ut the grief in my heart | is stronger than they, | for though they were my joy | formerly, today I notice them | and turn away forgetting." The echo, for me, was Graham's "And though I know . . . with lust, today it seemed" rhyming with Williams' "for though they . . . formerly, today I notice them . . ." But where Williams' widow will not judge her own desire to follow her husband in death by going to "a meadow, at the edge of a heavy woods, in the distance," where her son has told her of trees of white flowers, "and sink into the marsh near them," Graham's snake puts her in mind of a body's presence in any physical field, "This . . . perfect progress where | movement appears | to be a vanishing, a mending | of the visible || by the invisible -- just as we stitch the earth, | it seems to me, each time | we die, going back under, coming back up . . ." Williams' widow feels guilt in the unacknowledged co-inhabitance in time of those perennials, and wants to make some sacrifice to her husband's memory on their behalf, while Graham's snake does groundwork on her speaker's likelihood of reading the natural object's adequacy in terms of the body's fallenness, with labor its recompense for that fallenness.

As the poem closes, Graham's speaker becomes more dramatic, and the Keatsian dome (of backyard) a bit more echoey: "an honest work of the body, | its engine, its wind." By the last stanza, the metonymy's groundwork has given over to a craft-work, "meanings like sailboats | setting out || over the mind. Passion is work | that retrieves us, | lost stitches. It makes a pattern of us, | it fastens us | to sturdier stuff | no doubt." The performative ("no doubt") aggressively bays back on the poem's clever troping at the beginning, where the snake played Demeter to the field's hemstitches. Something Eliotic that needs Marc Anthony creeps into the close. Nonetheless the poem offers an interesting revanche on Williamsian progressivism, and signals a resistance ("sturdier stuff") Eliotic modernism found in the early Eighties. Let the "perfect progress" stay

awhile as enemy of the good.

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### **Margaret says**

Part of my poetry binge reading. The poems tend to be longer, which allows for some interesting development of theme. Mostly, one more parameter space in getting caught up to speed in modern poetry!

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