



No Language Is Neutral

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A joyful, imagistic discovery of woman as speaker and subject. As a woman, a black, and a lesbian, Brand arrives at a rigorous and nakedly ruthless reclamation of the poetic.

No Language Is Neutral Details

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From Reader Review No Language Is Neutral for online ebook

Orla Hegarty says

My goals in 2018 for reading were to include more non-fiction and poetry as well as women of colour (I've been reading mostly women for a few years now but oh so white it was).

What a marvelous introduction to possibly my first complete book of poetry that I've ever read. A small book, yes, but baby steps.

Dionne Brand - a recipient of the Order of Canada - poet, lesbian, woman of colour, Torontonian is someone I intend to get to know better. So few words...yet what power!

Thank-you feminist internet for bringing the writing of this woman into my life. Well overdue.

Atena Oyadi says

Thick, sad poems. Dark and hard to read, but worth the effort. I found this when I first reading Audre Lorde when I was floating around the aisles of used book stores first year of undergrad.

Chaneli says

woooow wow wow!!! i don't even know what to say

Emily says

5/5 stars - I never thought I'd be adding a book of POETRY of all things to my favourites list, but the stuff I read for uni continues to surprise me.

I can't imagine what it must be like to be able to weave words into poetry so beautifully. This is the kind of poetry I think should be popular right now. Not only is it important (especially because it's Black History Month), but it's GOOD. If you like any kind of poetry at all, I think you need to read this small collection. The way the poems are set up in the book is very interesting as well. With a frame of one poem surrounding the others in the collection. With a focus on black women and the trans-atlantic slave trade, it's incredible power and uncomfortable, but it's REAL.

Maythee says

This book isn't in print anymore but you can sometimes find it online. It's beautiful, urgent revolutionary poetry. Brand writes it like few others can. I remember wanting to read everything else she'd ever written

after finishing this book.

mwpm says

So the street is still there, still melting with sun
still the shining waves of heat at one o'clock
the eyelashes scorched, staring the distance of the
park to the parade stand, still razor grass burnt and
cropped, everything made indistinguishable from dirt
by age and custom, white washed, and the people...
still I suppose the scorpion orchid by the road, that
fine red tongue of flamboyant and orange lips
muzzling the air, that green plum turning fat and
crimson, still the crazy bougainvillea fancying and
nettling itself purple, pink, red, white, still the trickle of
sweat and cold flush of heat raising the smell of
cotton and skin... still the dank rank of breadfruit milk,
their bash and rain on steps, still the bridge this side
the sea that side, the rotting ship barnacle eaten still
the butcher's blood staining the walls of the market,
the ascent of hills, stony and breathless, the dry
yellow patches of earth still threaten to swamp at the
next deluge.... so the road, that stretch of sand and
pitch struggling up, glimpses sea, village, earth
bare-footed hot, women worried, still the faces,
masked in sweat and sweetness, still the eyes
watery, ancient, still the hard, distinct, brittle smell of
slavery.

- **Return, 1**, pg. 10

* * *

No language is neutral. I used to haunt the beach at
Guaya, two rivers sentinel the country sand, not
backra white but nigger brown sand, one river dead
and teeming from waste and alligators, the other
rumbling to the ocean in a tumult, the swift undertow
blocking the crossing of little girls except on the tied
up dress hips of big women, then, the taste of leaving
was already on my tongue and cut deep into my
skinny pigeon toed away, language here was strict
description and teeth edging truth. Here was beauty
and here was nowhere. The smell of hurrying passed
my nostrils with the smell of sea water and fresh fish
wind, there was history which had taught my eyes to
look for escape even beneath the almost leaves fat

as women, the conch shell tiny as sand, the rock stone old like water. I learned to read this from a woman whose hand trembled at the past, then even being born to her was temporary, wet and thrown half dressed among the dozens of brown legs itching to run. It was as if a signal burning like a fer de lance's sting turned my eyes against the water even as love for this nigger beach became resolute.

- **No Language is Neutral**, pg. 22

* * *

I want to wrap myself around you here in this line so that you will know something, not just that I am dying in some way but that I did this for some reason. This grace, you see, come as a surprise and nothing till now knock on my teeming skull, then, these warm watery syllables, a woman's tongue so like a culture, plunging toward stones not yet formed into flesh, language not yet made... I want to kiss you deeply, smell taste the warm water of your mouth as warm as your hands. I lucky is grace that gather me up and forgive my plainness.

- **Hard Against the Soul, 2**, pg. 36

Nykea says

Beautiful and genuine.

"I only know now that my longing for this old woman was longing to leave the imprisoned gaze of men."

"I know that since an old woman, darkening, cuts herself away limb from limb, sucks herself white"

Amy says

My personal favourite is: Hard Against the Soul.

Awesome awesome feminist canadian author. Can't wait to read more.

Aislyn says

A beautiful and emotional collection of powerful poetry regarding identity, culture, the impacts of colonial history and slavery on the Caribbean and the different communities that live there, and many other things. A fantastic read for Black History Month if you're looking to branch out to more authors and enjoy poetry. I did read this for one of my university classes and want everyone to experience it. This collection is so layered, I could re-read it five times and still pull different meanings from it over and over. Highly recommend.
