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Teaching My Mother How To Give Birth (mouthmark Series Book 10)



Synopsis

What elevates 'teaching my mother how to give birth', what gives the poems their disturbing brilliance, is Warsan Shire's ability to give simple, beautiful eloquence to the veiled world where sensuality lives in the dominant narrative of Islam; reclaiming the more nuanced truths of earlier times - as in Tayeb Salih's work - and translating to the realm of lyric the work of the likes of Nawal El Saadawi. As Rumi said, "Love will find its way through all languages on its own"; in 'teaching my mother how to give birth', Warsan's debut pamphlet, we witness the unearthing of a poet who finds her way through all preconceptions to strike the heart directly.

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Customer Reviews

This is a great collection of poems from a talented young writer. I stumbled across one of her poems online and immediately sought out her chapbook here. Warsan Shire's writing is elegant, powerful, and makes me uncomfortable in the best ways. On rare occasions, I find art that fills me up.

Sometimes, it is with rage, at others it is with guilt, or joy, or inspiration. This is one of those books that makes me feel. All of those things. And more. Read this book. Read these poems.

I read this far too quickly, I was eager. I suggest you, next reader, take it slowly, savour it. Her words come from a place of visceral, raw emotion. It's quiet at times, loud in others. It carries an uncompromising honesty. I couldn't keep it in my possession, I had to share it, I gave it to someone else who could be transported as I was.

I gave my kids (adults) this book and the DVD Taylor Camp and said, "Now don't give me anymore grief about the way you were raised." This lady makes simple words and statements profound. My daughters love her work.

Warsan Shire's poems are poignant, beautiful, and resonant. She voices the pain of being imbricated in cultures, the rejection of the adoptive culture and the sense of displacement. She torques language and brings the reader to new understanding of the immigrant's experience. I'll be using this book in my Critical Thinking class.

One of the most prolific writers of our time. Warsan Shire writes with a refined approach and a wide array of emotive access. Her words are raw, harmonious and hauntingly beautiful. This book serves as the reality of not only many Somali women but women alike. With tribute to pain, trauma, memory, kinship, journey, Warsan makes room for readers to lose themselves in a provocative world. In her poems, storytelling takes place in an extraordinary and gripping way. No matter the length of this collection its pages will sustain you, its power will feed you, its words will charge you. Warsan is a timeless and enduring poet, a force this generation needs.

My only complaint about this book of poetry is that it's too small. I wanted to stay in the head of Warsan Shire for much longer. Warsan Shire is a rising star in my opinion and I cannot wait for what else she has in store for us. She has a beautiful mind that transcends into her poetry about womanhood, family, feminism and relationships.

I stumbled up on Warsan Shire and her poetry a few years ago on Twitter. I was a fan of her tweets prior to reading any of her poetry. A line or two of one of Warsan Shire's poems was tweeted into my timeline last night and on a whim I decided to download *Teaching My Mother How to Give Birth*. These poems are still speaking to me and I'm listening. Warsan Shire has one of those poetic voices that stir instead of soothe. These poems will linger and hover around you and in your subconscious for days, weeks, and years to come. There are some lines that kick and punch others that pinch.

These are poems that inspire and empower. These are a few lines from some of my favorite poems from this collection: Bone "What is she hungry for?" Beauty "Anything that leaves her mouth sounds like sex. Our mother has banned her from saying God's name." Ugly "...her hands are a civil war, a refugee camp behind each ear,..." My absolute favorite was the last and shortest of the collection, "In Love and In War." I read these poems in one sitting. I plan on reading them over and over and over again.

These words wash over you like a steam bath. They engulf. They warm. They purify. This is a tiny book with big emotions and I appreciate it. It's a wonderful gift to give and to receive. As the prose from Beyoncé's Lemonade, I know Shire has gained popularity and that's great. This book is why she should be regarded. Her words speak volumes even when Beyoncé isn't the one saying them.

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