



Born Palestinian, Born Black

Suheir Hammad

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Suheir Hammad has given us a collection of poems that have their roots in a land near the edge of the sea. Here is the voice of one woman who has not forgotten the plight of her people. Born Black is about culture, conflict, and consciousness.

Born Palestinian, Born Black Details

Date : Published October 15th 1996 by Writers & Readers Publishing (first published October 1996)

ISBN : 9780863162442

Author : Suheir Hammad

Format : Paperback 97 pages

Genre : Poetry, Nonfiction, Race

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From Reader Review *Born Palestinian, Born Black* for online ebook

Lindsay says

Good, though having read fabulous *Zaatardiva*, I appreciate the maturity she grew into, both in content and style.

Fatima E. says

i would be interested in having a dialogue with hammad about the cultural property of language. the aave used throughout some of the poems seemed to me like a muddling and appropriation of a culture/oppression/generational trauma that one merely decides to identify with because of parrallels to ones own culture/oppression/generational trauma... this was a source of discomfort.

?? says

I really expected to like this. I love the Suheir Hammad poems I've heard on Def Poetry Jam and TED. Her gorgeous delivery is definitely a factor, and maybe in part I just read too much work in this genre so my expectations are overblown, but I don't think it's just that - these poems seemed a bit same-ish, in content and tone, like one long righteous wail and I didn't love it. There are some standout lines (I'll go through it later to pick out my favourites) but as a whole I was disappointed.

Sarah says

In general, I really liked this collection by Suheir Hammad, who I generally admire a lot. I love how viscerally she evokes both Palestine and New York. She is unabashed, and I have usually loved her confrontational style; it is, after all, her intention to make us uncomfortable, and that intention is noble. So most of the book was filled with the type of poetry that you want to read and then put down so you can absorb it for a while. But in the middle of the book there is a poem - one stop (hebron revisited) - that crossed a line for me, in that it blurred concepts that should not be blurred, imagining physical violence against Baruch Goldstein, the Brooklyn-born Israeli settler and extremist who opened fire on Palestinian Muslims praying at the Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron during Ramadan in 1994, killing 29 people and injuring another 125. It's not her revenge fantasy about Goldstein that bothered me; he was a specific public figure, an emblem for those who support ethno-religious violence and he's dead and not in danger of being harmed by her writing. Writing is a mechanism by which she's dealing with her overwhelming emotion at his acts. But the imagery she uses in some parts of the poem would be so offensive to most Jews - and in fact, most Christians as well, as she invokes tired historical Christian tropes about Jews - in the way they play on historical narratives of ordinary Jews who are not massacring Muslim worshippers. It might be true that Hammad is getting at the idea of Israel forcing Jews to associate with its policies, but this poem doesn't seem to well support that possible critique. At any rate, otherwise I would have given this book 4 stars, but her sloppiness with her metaphors and imagery in that poem specifically, which doesn't give adequate

consideration to the horrifically-iconic nature of such narratives, means I can't bring myself to do it. However, I don't want one poem to overshadow the importance of the other poems in the book, which are definitely brave and important to read. I would still recommend this book.

Vikki Marshall says

Suheir Hammad is an upright voice for the dispossessed, in this collection Hammad offers us her world, it is raw, urban and it is powerful. She has the poetic voice of an activist, a feminist and a woman wounded by an unfair world. Her words are her strength against a struggle few of us know so intimately. For the time we spend within the pages of this book we have the honor of marching alongside Ms. Hammad as she confronts the voiceless atrocities that have moved her. This unique perspective in now over a decade old but Hammad's youthful rendering remains entirely relevant in today's state of affairs. She wields an openness; a vulnerable fierceness of pride and she doesn't tread lightly. We are required to see the very images we all turn away from in order to see the depth of Hammad's evocative humanity. To capture the true essence you must hear her read her poetry in person, she is a force to be acknowledged.

I. says

Her poetry isn't my thing but I liked good word, scarlet rain, exotic, ismi, fascism is in fashion...

Ayesha Rizwan says

Truly heart breaking.....

Eventhough some of the instances the writer's protagonist retaliates against the oppressors and acts as a opstacle in their way which would not be easily ridden. But in the end the pain is what stays faithful because in the end its always the same struggle, the struggle for land occupied by foreign invaders, a colonial tail of a "postcolonial" world.

Madeleine says

This book is a lot. I love her later writing more, though.

Samihah says

6/5 stars

Kari says

Having trouble finding this one...

Daniel says

An excellent read to see the style and work that preceded Breaking Poems which is another short, robust, and powerfully poignant collection. Suheir Hammad manages to bring queerness, blackness, Palestinian-ness altogether for a collection of poetry that predated intersectionality as a well-known fact by 20 years. Keep your eyes on Suheir Hammad--there's more brilliance yet.

Edina Truth-Jones says

i wish i woulda,
woulda caught you on the train
on an empty car into flatbush

woulda reached into the conductor's booth
grabbed an *intifada* stone and
crushed your skull
to dig up your thoughts and
burn them up

Ya says

I met her before she became big and then I saw her live at Russell Simmons Def Poetry Jam. She is an amazing poet with a quiet but powerful soul. This book brings together people of all backgrounds and lets us see how we really all are one.

Linzmars says

I love Suheir Hammad. She's one of the best poets...and one of the most inspiring. But her poems are better performed than just read. One needs to read a poem twice to catch the beauty and deepness of her writings. I found some of the poems quite amateur as they were written back in the late 90s. But for those interested in poetry...it's a must read, and a must have.

Nema Al-Araby says

Suheir Hammad's poetry is beautiful. SHE is beautiful. Her soul. She has too many tender and delicate ideas that could make the world so much better. I wish I heard all these poems being recited, it would've been much much better with her great talent at writing and reciting together.

Suheir was one of the major reasons Palestine is always on my mind now. And it's ironic how a bleeding country inspires so much.

The only thing I didn't like in her poetry was her slang accent, I don't like slang in poetry nor do I like abbreviations, they somehow (on a personal level and view) degrade poetry and the inspiration it brings to the heart.

I'm definitely getting another book for her!
