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Gwendolyn Brooks

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Annie Allen Details

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Author : Gwendolyn Brooks

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From Reader Review Annie Allen for online ebook

Allison Hurd says

This is an award-winning and history-making book of poetry from 1945. It was well outside of my comfort zone, but I still found tons to enjoy.

There were a few poems that completely captured an emotion or a moment which I really loved such as "do not be afraid of no" and "pygmies are pygmies still though perch on Alps."

There were two that also captured the idea of privilege and the request for consideration of an issue without devaluing other issues a la the Black Lives Matter or #metoo movements that resounded with me deeply. It's at once so comforting and enraging to know that none of these issues are new, it's just that my skinfolk are so good at repressing narratives that make them worried that if we share power, we'll be treated like we've treated others for hundreds of years.

Thought-provoking, beautifully worded and evocative. I'm not sure poetry will become a mainstay of my literary diet, but this was a great treat.

James says

It's sad that a review has yet to be written for Gwendolyn Brooks' "Annie Allen." There's not even a cover picture for the book yet. Brooks is known for her highly anthologized poem "We Real Cool," and this collection is a great way to get acquainted with her earlier poetry and begin to become familiarized with her extensive body of work. "Annie Allen" won the Pulitzer in 1950, which is not the least bit surprising considering her work. Her words are striking and fluid and the poems are masterfully crafted. The poems have an expansive range of ideas, moments, and structures. They delve into childhood, womanhood, race and the passing of tradition. Her sounds and rhythms feel like they were heavily influenced by Mr. Manley Hopkins himself. Hopkins was awesome and I am interested to know if anyone can see other influences in this work.

Rod-Kelly Hines says

Okay. I read GB in high school and a bit in undergrad as well, and I didn't quite latch onto it. There was something a bit pedestrian about the format. At the time, I was into contemporary poets who wrote very freely, without rules and with very abstract themes. Upon returning to GB and her Pulitzer Prize winning collection, Annie Allen, I really was able to dig in and understand her genius. She takes the simple, the everyday life of this black woman, and really magnifies the various layers of complexity underneath her simplistic exterior. There's some deep stuff here that takes a minute to sink in: the poems start off deceptively simple and then become quite lyrical and dense.

Andrew says

Only two or so poems really spoke to me, but that doesn't mean it's bad however.

Christina Packard says

I did not enjoy this book at all, but I think it is my lack of understand poetry.

Brina says

Gwendolyn Brooks won the Pulitzer Prize for her poetry collection *Annie Allen* in 1950, making her the first African American woman to win the illustrious award. A sequel to her *Street Called Bronzeville*, *Annie Allen* continues to describe in detail the African American experience during the late 1940s. Through her expressive language, Brooks relates how African Americans navigated post war America, and this vivid collection has stood the test of time.

Annie Allen and her mother are one of many signature poems in this collection. Brooks describes what both daughter and mother hope for in their life, for good and bad. Using her poetry as a platform, Brooks expresses how she hopes that *Annie Allen* finds a stable marriage to a black soldier returning from war. He should be a steady family man who is ready to settle down and live the American dream. Brooks' language is sad yet hopeful as *Annie's* parents relay what knowledge they have in hopes that their daughter has a brighter future than they did.

The centerpiece of this collection is *The Anniad*. A ballad, the *Anniad* describes in detail the experience of a soldier both on the front and after his return. His adjustment to life in the African American community can at times be trying, but Brooks hopes that he does not turn to alcoholism as a means to get through the rigors of life. She has seen many men in her community fall prey to both whiskey and womanizing and desires that these soldiers do more with their lives than repeat the community's habits. Depressing in language at times, *The Anniad* relays the feeling that African Americans should attempt to live the American dream after fighting to defeat fascism abroad.

Following the *Anniad*, the language starts to flow and become upbeat. Brooks urges her brothers and sisters to make the church and the barbershop the safe centers of their lives rather than languishing on the street. Rather than performing as clowns in front of white audiences, soldiers should take advantage of the GI bill and move forward with their lives. Published two years after Jackie Robinson integrated baseball, Brooks is perhaps using him as an example to show that anything is possible. As a result, the poems in the second half of the collection become more positive in language.

Gwendolyn Brooks paved the way for generations of African American women to express their feelings through poetry, most notably Audre Lorde in her work *Sister, Outsider*. Named a poet laureate of Illinois in 1968 and holding the position until her death in 2000, Brooks became the torch bearer for young poets throughout the state. A remarkable woman, Brooks has had many Chicago institutions named for her. *Annie Allen* is much deserving of its awards and is a poetry collection that should be widely read and studied.

Camille says

Not my Lipton

Karen says

* Understanding Oppression: African American Rights (Then and Now)

* 50 Books That Every African American Should Read

Book of poetry by Gwendolyn Brooks that was published in 1949, and for which she received the Pulitzer Prize in 1950. This made her the first African American to ever receive a Pulitzer Prize.

Diane Webber-thrush says

Line to line, this is beautiful. I'm not sure I understand the totality -- but I want to read more of her work and more about her life.

Cynthia says

I'm in love with the poetry of Gwendolyn Brooks. I'm happy to have found her words, finally, but sad to have gone so long without them. This volume is slim, but the poems are rich thematically and the language is complex, even in the deceptively simple sing-song verses.

Kemesha Gabbidon says

This book is a long poem divided into three main sections. From birth to womanhood, the story of Annie Allen. It is very different to review a book like this, however, I find the use of poetry to tell a beautiful story. Brooks also has a masterful command of the English language. The language she uses weaves wonderfully and creates a story of self-actualization. Quick read and I enjoyed it.
