



Head Off & Split: Poems

Nikky Finney

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Winner, 2011 National Book Award for Poetry

Winner, 2012 GLCS Award for Poetry

Winner, 2012 SIBA Book Award for Poetry

Nominee, 2012 NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Literary Work in Poetry

The poems in Nikky Finney's breathtaking new collection *Head Off & Split* sustain a sensitive and intense dialogue with emblematic figures and events in African American life: from civil rights matriarch Rosa Parks to former secretary of state Condoleezza Rice, from a brazen girl strung out on lightning to a terrified woman abandoned on a rooftop during Hurricane Katrina. Finney's poetic voice is defined by an intimacy that holds a soft yet exacting eye on the erotic, on uncanny political and family events, like her mother's wedding waltz with South Carolina senator Strom Thurmond, and then again on the heartbreaking hilarity of an American president's final State of the Union address.

Artful and intense, Finney's poems ask us to be mindful of what we fraction, fragment, cut off, dice, dishonor, or throw away, powerfully evoking both the lawless and the sublime.

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