



## **What I Say: Innovative Poetry by Black Writers in America (Modern & Contemporary Poetics)**

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*What I Say: Innovative Poetry by Black Writers in America* is the second book in a landmark two-volume anthology that explodes narrow definitions of African American poetry by examining experimental poems often excluded from previous scholarship. The first volume, *Every Goodbye Ain't Gone*, covers the period from the end of World War II to the mid-1970s. In *What I Say*, editors Aldon Lynn Nielsen and Lauri Ramey have assembled a comprehensive and dynamic collection that brings this pivotal work up to the present day.

The elder poets in this collection, such as Nathaniel Mackey, C. S. Giscombe, Will Alexander, and Ron Allen, came of age during and were powerfully influenced by the Black Arts Movement, and *What I Say* grounds the collection in its black modernist roots. In tracing the fascinating and unexpected paths of experimentation these poets explored, however, Nielsen and Ramey reveal the tight delineations of African American poetry that omitted noncanonical forms. This invigorating panoply of work, when restored, brings into focus the creatively elastic frontiers and multifaceted expressions of contemporary black poetry.

Several of the poets discussed in *What I Say* forged relationships with members of the L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poetry movement and participated in the broader community of innovative poetry that emerged in the late 1970s and early 1980s and continues to exert a powerful influence today.

Each volume can stand on its own, and reading them in tandem will provide a clear vision of how innovative African American poetries have evolved across the twentieth century and into the twenty-first. *What I Say* is infinitely teachable, compelling, and rewarding. It will appeal to a broad readership of poets, poetics teachers, poetics scholars, students of African American literature in nonnarrative forms, Afro-futurism, and what lies between the modern and the contemporary in global and localized writing practices.

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