



Prelude to Bruise

Saeed Jones

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Praise for Saeed Jones:

"Jones is the kind of writer who's more than wanted: he's desperately needed."—*FlavorWire*

"I get shout-happy when I read these poems; they are the gospel; they are the good news of the sustaining power of imagination, tenderness, and outright joy."—**D. A. Powell**

"Prelude to Bruise works its tempestuous mojo just under the skin, wreaking a sweet havoc and rearranging the pulse. These poems don't dole out mercy. Mr. Jones undoubtedly dipped his pen in fierce before crafting these stanzas that rock like backslap. Straighten your skirt, children. The doors of the church are open."—**Patricia Smith**

"It's a big book, a major book. A game-changer. Dazzling, brutal, real. Not just brilliant, caustic, and impassioned but a work that brings history—in which the personal and political are inter-constitutive—to the immediate moment. Jones takes a reader deep into lived experience, into a charged world divided among unstable yet entrenched lines: racial, gendered, political, sexual, familial. Here we absorb each quiet resistance, each whoop of joy, a knowledge of violence and of desire, an unbearable ache/loss/yearning. This is not just a "new voice" but a new song, a new way of singing, a new music made of deep grief's wildfire, of burning intelligence and of all-feeling heart, scorched and seared. In a poem, Jones says, "Boy's body is a song only he can hear." But now that we have this book, we can all hear it. And it's unforgettable."—**Brenda Shaughnessy**

"Inside each hunger, each desire, speaks the voice of a boy that admits 'I've always wanted to be dangerous.' This is not a threat but a promise to break away from the affliction of silence, to make audible the stories that trouble the dimensions of masculinity and discomfort the polite conversations about race. With impressive grace, Saeed Jones situates the queer black body at the center, where his visibility and vulnerability nurture emotional strength and the irrepressible energy to claim those spaces that were once denied or withheld from him. Prelude to a Bruise is a daring debut."—**Rigoberto González**

From "Sleeping Arrangement":

*Take your hand out
from under my pillow.*

*And take your sheets with you.
Drag them under. Make pretend ghosts.*

*I can't have you rattling the bed springs
so keep still, keep quiet.*

*Mistake yourself for shadows.
Learn the lullabies of lint.*

Saeed Jones works as the editor of BuzzFeedLGBT.

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From reader reviews:

Richard Fentress:

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