



THE COMPLETE WORKS OF PAT PARKER

WITH A NEW INTRODUCTION BY JUDY GRAHN

SAPPHIC CLASSICS
FROM A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S PRESS
& *SINISTER WISDOM*

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The Complete Works of Pat Parker* Issued as Fourth "Sapphic Classic" from A Midsummer Night's Press & *Sinister Wisdom

A Midsummer Night's Press and *Sinister Wisdom* are pleased to announce the publication of *The Complete Works of Pat Parker* with a new introduction by poet and scholar Judy Grahn; an afterword by volume editor Julie R. Enszer, with extensive notes on the poems; photographs of Parker; and a bibliography.

The Complete Works of Pat Parker includes Parker's poetic masterwork, *Movement in Black*, as well as the poetry collection *Jonestown & other madness*, in addition to her published essays and other prose, along with two unpublished plays and a number of previously uncollected poems. Editor Julie R. Enszer notes, "The breadth of creative output collected here demonstrates the seriousness of Parker's overall work as a writer. Beginning in 1963, when she was nineteen years old, and continuing until she died in 1989, Parker took her work as a writer seriously. Gathering as much of it as possible into a single volume invites readers to take it seriously as well."

Poets, scholars, and readers praise Parker's work, which has been out of print until now. Award-winning author Alexis de Veaux says:

Pat Parker. She was a blueswoman lesbian poet rocknroller performance artist. A "revolutionary feminist," who understood revolution is "not neat or pretty or quick." She was a woman intimate with the ravages of breast cancer. And she was a daughter, sister, lover, mother. She was young when she died. But she defied any simple renderings of those labels.

In *The Complete Works of Pat Parker*, we have a trove of her artistic and political engagements-poetry and stories and plays and speeches; these are not separate realities. They intertwine in her now classic works, *Movement in Black* (1978), *Womanslaughter* (1978), and *Jonestown & Other Madness* (1985). But here too are less celebrated and uncollected works, plays especially, that show off Parker's

willingness to experiment, to push us towards more politicized realities. And in them, she was bracing, accessible, unapologetically black. She turned her pen to James Baldwin, her lovers, former president Lyndon Johnson, Eleanor Bumpers, her mother, to the world at large, saying "...I am not a good American. I do not wish to have the world colonized, bombarded and plundered in order to eat steak." Pat Parker stayed woke to black suffering, violence against black bodies- especially those of black women-to the suffering engendered by multiple, egregious oppressions. With this oeuvre, we are allowed an opportunity to historicize Pat Parker's significance to black women's literary traditions, lesbian erotics, to black queer struggles and black feminisms, and to global social justice movements. She was in her time. Now, with this important text, she will be in all time to come.

Poet and writer Kazim Ali notes, "For those in the know, Pat Parker never went anywhere. Contemporary and comrade of Audre Lorde, Parker was one of the most important lesbian writers of color throughout the 70s and 80s. Her work was cherished and widely available though, like most of the other writers in this community, her work went out of print. With Parker's early death in 1989, her work remained important to only a small but devoted readership. Now editor Julie Enszer has brought all of Parker's work together for a new generation of readers and activists and just in time. This edition includes all the poems Parker published in her lifetime plus her uncollected poetry, two plays and a range of autobiographical writing and essays. As the Black Lives Matter movement calls attention to the grave risk Black people have always faced and when poets and artists wrestle with the question of how to marry the political and the personal in their work, we have never needed Parker's work more than NOW. It is absolutely immediate, searing, salving, saving, and NECESSARY."

The Complete Poems of Pat Parker is the fourth title in the **Sapphic Classics Series**, reprint edition of iconic works of lesbian poetry, co-published by A Midsummer Night's Press and *Sinister Wisdom*. Lawrence Schimel, publisher of A Midsummer Night's Press, said, "This is independent publishing at its best: collaborative, creative, and compelling, making sure that important and necessary voices get heard."

About Pat Parker

During her lifetime, **Pat Parker** was a renowned African-American, lesbian-feminist poet and performer. She was the author of *Jonestown & Other Madness* (1985), *Movement in Black* (1978, 1983, 1989, 1999), *Womanslaughter* (1978), *Pit Stop* (1974, 1975), and *Child of Myself* (1972, 1974). Her poems appeared in numerous journals, newspapers, and anthologies. With Judy Grahn, she recorded the album *Where Would I Be Without You* (Olivia Records, 1976), and one of her spoken poems appeared on the album *Lesbian Concentrate*.

She performed live readings at numerous colleges and universities throughout the United States and abroad. Her work is often included in Women's Studies curricula.

Parker was born in Houston, TX, in 1944 and moved to Los Angeles, CA after she graduated high school. She lived in the San Francisco bay area from 1965 until her death. Parker died in 1989 from complications of cancer. Her partner of nine years, Martha Dunham, and their daughter, Anastasia Dunham-Parker-Brady, survived her as

well as Cassidy Brown whom she co-parented.

About the Sapphic Classics Series

Sapphic Classics are reprint editions of iconic works of lesbian poetry. Inaugurated in 2013 with *Crime Against Nature* by Minnie Bruce Pratt, **Sapphic Classics** are published annually through a partnership between A Midsummer Night's Press and *Sinister Wisdom*. The other titles in the series include *Living as a Lesbian* by Cheryl Clarke and *What Can I Ask: New and Selected Poems* by Elana Dykewomon.

About A Midsummer Night's Press

A Midsummer Night's Press is an independent poetry publisher, founded by Lawrence Schimel in 1991. In addition to the Sapphic Classics series, the press publishes books of poetry under three other imprints: 1) Fabula Rasa: devoted to works inspired by mythology, folklore, and fairy tales, 2) Body Language: devoted to texts exploring questions of gender and sexual identity, and 3) Periscope: devoted to works of poetry in translation by women writers. For more information:

www.amidsummernightspress.com

About Sinister Wisdom

Sinister Wisdom is a multicultural lesbian literary & art journal that publishes four issues each year. Publishing since 1976, *Sinister Wisdom* works to create a multicultural, multi-class lesbian space. *Sinister Wisdom* seeks to open, consider and advance the exploration of community issues. *Sinister Wisdom* recognizes the power of language to reflect our diverse experiences and to enhance our ability to develop critical judgment, as lesbians evaluating our community and our world. Julie R. Enszer is the editor and publisher of *Sinister Wisdom*. For more information:

www.sinisterwisdom.org

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