

The Collected Poems of

Josie Craig Berry

Poet Critic Intellectual



Josie Craig Berry's poems affirm that music, imagination and the rigor of form have long been tools of clarity and conscience in the Black lyric tradition. These poems are incisive, prophetic and alive with ever-urgent unrest.

—Tracy K. Smith, US Poet Laureate, 2017-2019

Josie Craig Berry was a poet and writer of her time, yet well ahead of her time. This collection chronicles over six decades of poetry and prose that speak to economic injustice, capitalism, patriarchy, racial injustice, immigration, and the white man's Jesus—scathing attacks on the rationalizing of the irrational in measured verse which heightens both tension and voice. Sadly, so many of these poems speak to ills that continue to linger, but that is also a testament to Miss Berry's mind and literary activism.

—Quraysh Ali Lansana, Emmy Award-winning journalist & author of over 20 books of poetry, nonfiction and children's literature

In the poem "Heritage," the speaker exclaims "when I write, I place at top of page Thank God I'm black!" Berry's poetry allows me to see myself in the past where once I only saw white faces. I, too, am an unapologetic and unashamed Oklahoma Black woman poet—I walk in the footsteps of Josie Craig Berry and honor her legacy.

—Mary B. Gray, author of *Who Do You Think You Are?* (Turning Plow Press 2022)

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