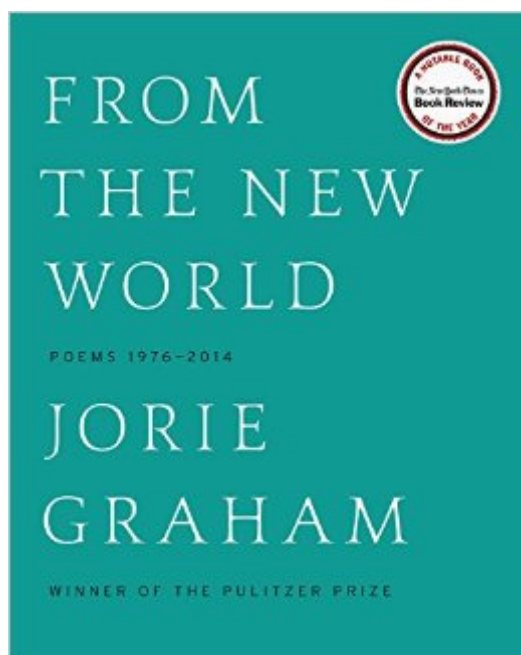


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# From The New World (Los Angeles Times Book Award: Poetry): Poems 1976-2014



## Synopsis

An indispensable volume of poems, selected from almost four decades of work, that tracks the evolution of one of our most renowned contemporary poets, Pulitzer Prize-winner Jorie Graham. The Poetry Foundation has named Jorie Graham "one of the most celebrated poets of the American post-war generation." In 1996, her volume of poetry selected from her first five books, *Dream of a Unified Field*, won the Pulitzer Prize. Now, twenty years later, Graham returns with a new selection, this time from eleven volumes, including previously unpublished work, which, in its breathtaking overview, illuminates the development of her remarkable poetry thus far. In *From the New World: Poems 1976-2014*, we can witness the unfolding of Graham's signature ethical and eco-political concerns, as well as her deft exploration of mythology, history, love and, increasingly, love of the world in a time of crisis. As the work evolves, the depth of compassion grows "gradually transforming, widening and expanding her extraordinary formal resources and her inimitable style. These pages present a brilliant portrait one of the major voices of American contemporary poetry. As critic Calvin Bedient says, "Jorie Graham has proved oversized as a poet in the field of contemporary poetry, it is because she continually recalls the great Western tradition of philosophical and religious inquiry . . . tenaciously thinking and feeling her way through layer after layer of perception, like no poet before her."

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

A Great Read One day, sooner than some might think, someone is no doubt going to publish a Critical Edition of Jorie Graham's work. This edition, complete with every one of her

extant poems, annotated, and footnoted, might well become the standard reference for readers, but it will not be, I suspect, the one most will want to read first. That honor will most certainly go to the just published, *From the New World: Poems 1976-2014*. Here, collected splendidly, are the poems that Ms. Graham thought best represented her life's work thus far. It has been said that some of Ms. Graham's work is difficult, and certainly one would not recommend reading this book on the train home as it is so mesmerizing, you will likely miss your stop. So set aside your iPhone and find a quiet place where the loudest buzz you hear is a bee seeking a flower and start your reading. You will not be disappointed. And although Ms. Graham's poems show us how our world is imperiled by a long list of evils—the destruction of the environment, the loss of our privacy, militarism, suppression of human rights, to name a few—they also show us that if we think and feel our way, we are more likely to retain our humanity. Reading her work makes this task all the more possible.

I experienced this as a whole new book from Jorie Graham that read more like a novel than a collection. There is no poet who brings more focus to the question of what makes poetry continue—through war, upheavals in nature, and the passing of history. The sound is beautiful and the lyric threads through the passing of time like Penelope's spindle—patient, consistent, expectant, and hopeful.

Jorie Graham's new book *"From the New World: Poems 1976-2014"* is a handsome volume of jazz craftsmanship, a modern catalog and a post-modern poetry reader's companion. Many poems stand out but one in particular qualifies Ms. Graham as a genius. The poem I refer to is titled "The Guardian Angel of the Little Utopia." A work is perhaps inspired by the work and life of the modern master Charles Baudelaire, an air permeates the poem of yellow and the underworld. The poet takes us to an angel whose responsible for preparing room in heaven for the new arrivals, some might have read Baudelaire and expect to find him "up here." But this is not the reason why I say the poet is a genius. The genius comes from the music, a jazz inspired tune, not rhyme, not repetition, but a lyrical tune aware of the rhythms of modern jazz. When we think of modern jazz, we think also of the giants of the 1950s and 1960s. Musicians like Charlie Parker, John Coltrane and Miles Davis come to mind. My thoughts turn towards Thelonious Monk, a pianist, whose sparse keyboard playing inspired a generation of midnight lovers. Monk once said (and I paraphrase here): "It's not the note you play that makes the music jazz, but it's the note that you don't play." The music of the poem learns from this advice. Sparse and compact prose is interspersed with punctuations of

sporadic verse, a combination that keeps the music going without being "too sweet." Like good champagne... not too sweet! In all a most enjoyable work. The book is my introduction to Jorie Graham, I am happy to have met her. Good luck reading! In the 1950s, jazz musician Miles Davis and his men gave birth to the "cool." Today, Jorie Graham gives birth to a poem, a living thing, it's amazing! it's new! And as Coltrane spoke through his reed he did bleed a swan's story of love and yellow sky! Allen Hagar

Unified Field has always been one of the dearest and most special works to me but what is so striking about From The New World is that it does not read like a selection from Unified Field and other works but rather like a completely new and distinct volume with an entirely original narrative arch. Strongly recommend. A veritably new work and sound from Jorie Graham.

This is a beautiful volume: from its design and heft to, most of all, its contents. Often I think that calling a book "indispensable" feels like hyperbole, but this collection is a great example of a book that really is indispensable "to anyone who loves poetry or to anyone who wants to understand how we might think more precisely about the biggest questions. You won't be able to get this music out of your head.

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