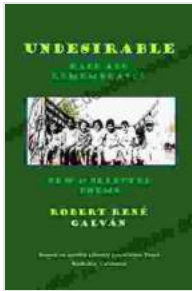


# Undesirable Race and Remembrance: An Exploration of Natasha Trethewey's New Selected Poems



In the realm of contemporary American literature, few poets have delved as profoundly into the intricate tapestry of race, history, and memory as

Natasha Trethewey. Her critically acclaimed body of work has earned her numerous accolades, including the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry in 2007 for her collection, "Native Guard." Trethewey's latest offering, "Undesirable," is a compelling new selected poems that traverses the complexities of race and remembrance, offering a poignant and thought-provoking exploration.



## Undesirable: Race and Remembrance - New & Selected Poems

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

Language	: English
File size	: 5436 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Print length	: 131 pages
Lending	: Enabled



### The Haunting Legacy of the Past

Throughout "Undesirable," Trethewey grapples with the enduring legacy of slavery and racism in America. In the poem "Native Guard," she evokes the horrors of the Civil War, where Black soldiers fought for their freedom against overwhelming odds. The speaker's haunting voice echoes the pain and injustice endured by her ancestors:



***““And sometimes I would hear them call me 'darks,' / and I would think of the men who died at Fort Pillow, / their bodies floating in the Mississippi...””***

Trethewey's poetry unflinchingly exposes the wounds inflicted by centuries of oppression, reminding readers of the ongoing struggle for racial equality. She weaves together historical narratives with personal experiences, creating a powerful and immersive exploration of the ways in which the past continues to shape the present.

## **Memory as a Form of Resistance**

In the face of adversity, Trethewey asserts the importance of memory as a form of resistance. She believes that by remembering the stories of those who have been marginalized and silenced, we can challenge dominant narratives and work towards a more just and equitable society. In the poem "Elegy," she writes:



***"...I will remember you / because you were here, / because you disappeared..."***

Through her poetry, Trethewey gives voice to the voiceless, ensuring that their stories are not forgotten. By honoring the lives of those who have been erased or ignored, she challenges the erasure and devaluation of Black experiences.

## **Interrogating the Concept of Race**

"Undesirable" also delves into the complex and often fluid nature of race in America. In the poem "Incident," Trethewey confronts a childhood encounter with racism, where she was labeled "undesirable" by a neighbor. This incident forces her to confront the harmful effects of racial categorization and the ways in which it can shape one's identity:

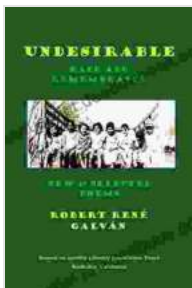
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***“...I had not known about / the world outside our yard, / where words like that could cut...”***

Trethewey's poetry skillfully interrogates the social construction of race, revealing its arbitrary and discriminatory nature. She challenges the idea of a fixed racial identity, arguing that it is a fluid and ever-evolving concept.

Natasha Trethewey's "Undesirable" is a profound and moving collection of poems that explores the complex intersections of race, history, and memory. Through her evocative language and unflinching honesty, Trethewey creates a powerful testament to the resilience and spirit of the human soul in the face of adversity. Her poetry serves as a reminder of the ongoing struggle for racial equality and the importance of remembering the stories of those who have been marginalized.

By confronting the painful realities of the past and challenging dominant narratives, Trethewey's "Undesirable" offers readers a deeply resonant exploration of the complexities of race and remembrance. It is a collection that will provoke thought, inspire empathy, and ultimately contribute to a more just and equitable world.



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