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Chronicles

Early Works
Dionne Brand



Chronicles: Early Works

Dionne Brand

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In these early works of Dionne Brand we hear the foundation of a poet's tone, her rhythm and her ethics. These poems announce a voice, stake a claim, and dare to utter the politics of their times while imagining a different future. These early works speak to a poet's journey across regions, across climates, across politics, across influences, across temperament, across histories, across desires, and through the ethical attunement of living in the present. In these poems Dionne Brand's words bring readers into the sharp harmonies of life's disappointments and potentials, as her words paint a world we at once recognize and must struggle to change.

– Rinaldo Walcott, Canada Research Chair of Social Justice and Cultural Studies,
OISE/University of Toronto

In this welcome republication of Brand's early poetry collections, readers will find themselves drawn into one of the more powerful imaginations of our times. Here is the violently wrenching sadness, the weight of history and loss, and in the face of such pain, the refusal to compromise for which she remains best known. But there is also a sometimes playful and self-deprecating humour along with the more biting commentary that carries an edge. Brand believes in the difference words can make, even when lamenting their inadequacy, and she makes us believe too.

– Diana Brydon, Canada Research Chair in Globalization and Cultural Studies,
University of Manitoba

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One of Canada's most distinguished poets, Dionne Brand explores and chronicles how history shapes human existence, in particular the lives of those ruptured and scattered by New World slaveries and modern crises. This republication of three early volumes presents a view of the trajectory of her poetic journey. Read retrospectively, the earlier work is haunting, a testament to a historical moment in which change seemed possible, even imminent, a belief nourished by the various social movements that galvanized a generation. Individually and as a whole, Brand's work charts a collective as well as a personal journey, delving into the burdens of history and the fugitive, contingent, dynamic, and mutable geographies of the African diaspora. She locates herself within matrices of language, place, gender, sexuality, and politics and maps what she calls the "murmurous genealogy" of her city, Toronto, and the denizen-citizenship of the contemporary global.

Dionne Brand is internationally known for her poetry, fiction, and essays. She has received many awards, notably the Governor General's Award for Poetry, the Trillium Award (Land to Light On, 1997), the Pat Lowther Award (thirsty, 2005), the City of Toronto Book Award (What We All Long For, 2006), and the Harbourfront Festival Award (2006), given in recognition of her substantial contribution to literature. Her most recent book, *Ossuaries*, won the 2011 Griffin Poetry Prize. She is a professor in the School of English and Theatre Studies at the University of Guelph.



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