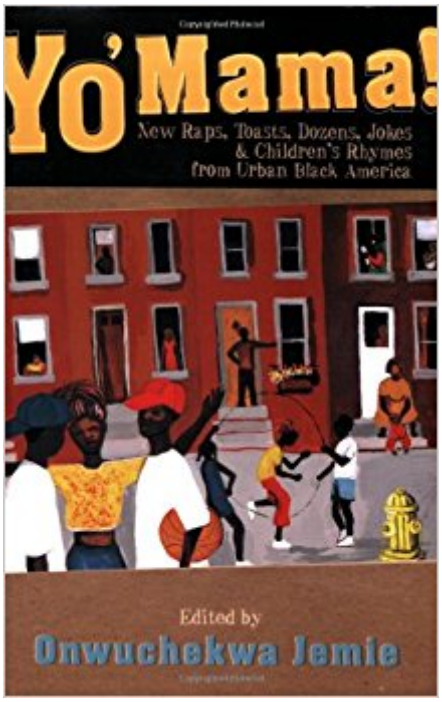
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Yo Mama!: New Raps, Toasts, Dozens, Jokes, And



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Synopsis

Collected primarily in metropolitan New York and Philadelphia during the classic era of black "street poetry" (i.e., during the late 1960s and early 1970s) these raps, signifyings, toasts, boasts, jokes and children’s rhymes will delight general readers as well as scholars. Ranging from the simple rhymes that accompany children’s games to verbally inventive insults and the epic exploits of traditional characters like Shine and Stagger Lee, these texts sound the deep rivers of culture, echoing two continents. Onwuchekwa Jemie’s introductory essay situates them in a globally pan-African context and relates them to more recent forms of oral culture such as rap and spoken word. Author note: Onwuchekwa Jemie teaches African American and African Literature at Howard University. He is the author of Langston Hughes: An Introduction to the Poetry and co-author of Toward the Decolonization of African Literature.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"...dive straight into the collection if you want to really understand what made Langston Hughes so damn fly."-City Limits "Jemie’s introductory essay places ’the dozens’ in a global context and relates them to modern forms, such as rap and spoken word.-Black Issues Book Review "...a must read and [an] excellent addition to the library of urban folklore and argot...Highly recommended."-Multicultural Review "[A] thoughtfully rambunctious and judiciously outrageous collection that will make you laugh until your eyes water."-The Texas Observer "This is a magnificent collection and long overdue. It builds on a long tradition of scholarship pioneered by

William Labov, Roger Abraham, Geneva Smitherman and others who see African American English as performance-based and the core and heart of African American culture. Moreover with all of its toasts, boasts, ritual insults, and the like, it adds hiphop flavor, allowing us to see how rap connects to this language-performance based art. A must read for all those interested in the roots of African American culture."-William Eric Perkins, Senior Research Scholar, Urban Minorities Research Project, University of Pennsylvania "This book sets the standard for an innovative tradition in works of this sort and, in time, will become a classic. Onwuchekwa Jemie's Yo' Mama! features the best of the old and the new in African American popular cultural forms. This is by far the best contemporary work on the subject."-Molefi Kete Asante, Editor, Journal of Black Studies, and author of The Afrocentric Idea (Temple). "This is a comprehensive collection of African American folklore. The transcriptions are well done-great texts! The introductions are thoughtful, meaty, provocative."-Daryl Cumber Dance, author of Honey, Hush!: An Anthology of African American Women's Humor and From My People: 400 Years of African American Folklore "Onwuchekwa Jemie has put together the very best collection from the masters of toasts, rhymes, jokes and raps. If you want to revel, roll, play, jump in and drown yourself in the richness of African American language, or just plain enjoy whatever language can do, this is the book for you."-Bill Labov

"Word Magic" from the streets of the inner city

I used to play Dozens and all forms of street slang and degradation of mamas, Daddys, Sisters, etc. on the schoolyard in my lower middle-class hood in N. Portland.I found this book by googling a few raps I remembered from the day and found that it contained not only these, but many variations of the same "Diss" rhymes but from different regions and even reverse forms from crackers that don't even know where Dozens came from. I consider this the definitive sociological textbook on inner-city children's, folk, and traditional rhymes and disses, as well as some toasts and such I was unaware of. I guarantee this is required reading for some "urban" history students(or just jailhouse historians like myself), but it is also a look into the way African-American youth found a way to cope with a society which tried to bring them down at every step. Required reading for any American that wants to understand everything from the birth of the Blues to the birth of Hip-Hop! It's all in there. I happen to be a white boy who is much more comfortable in a black neighborhood. But all my best friends read, and read well. When I'm done I will pass this one on.

I brought this book into my third grade classroom in preparation for our Joke Day. I knew that the

children would make cultural connections with it and enjoy it. Because the subtitle includes the words "children's rhymes," I assumed it would be suitable for the classroom; it also was a listed result when I searched our library catalog for "children's joke books."However, be advised that the book contains profanity. For example, one selection is entitled "F--- the Duck

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