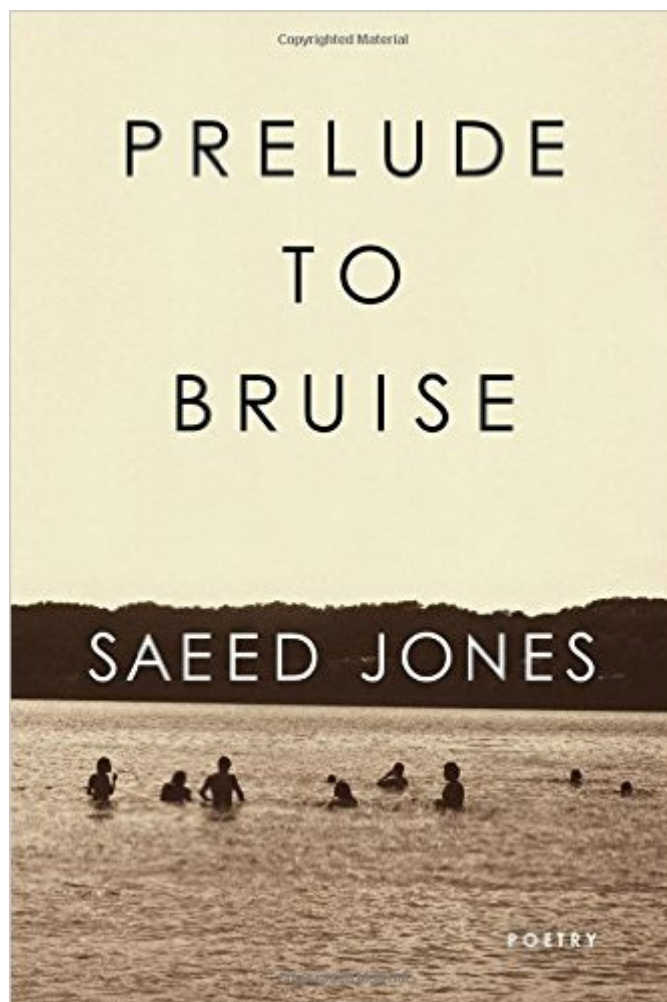


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# Prelude To Bruise



## Synopsis

Praise for Saeed Jones: "Jones is the kind of writer who's more than wanted: he's desperately needed." —FlavorWire; "This book leaves your body transformed in a way that poetry should." —ElevenEleven "I get shout-happy when I read these poems; they are the gospel; they are the good news of the sustaining power of imagination, tenderness, and outright joy." —D. A. Powell; "Prelude to Bruise works its tempestuous mojo just under the skin, wreaking a sweet havoc and rearranging the pulse. These poems don't dole out mercy. Mr. Jones undoubtedly dipped his pen in fierce before crafting these stanzas that rock like backslap. Straighten your skirt, children. The doors of the church are open." —Patricia Smith; "It's a big book, a major book. A game-changer. Dazzling, brutal, real. Not just brilliant, caustic, and impassioned but a work that brings history; in which the personal and political are inter-constitutive; to the immediate moment. Jones takes a reader deep into lived experience, into a charged world divided among unstable yet entrenched lines: racial, gendered, political, sexual, familial. Here we absorb each quiet resistance, each whoop of joy, a knowledge of violence and of desire, an unbearable ache/loss/yearning. This is not just a new voice but a new song, a new way of singing, a new music made of deep grief's wildfire, of burning intelligence and of all-feeling heart, scorched and seared. In a poem, Jones says, 'Boy's body is a song only he can hear.' But now that we have this book, we can all hear it. And it's unforgettable." —Brenda Shaughnessy; "Inside each hunger, each desire, speaks the voice of a boy that admits 'I've always wanted to be dangerous.' This is not a threat but a promise to break away from the affliction of silence, to make audible the stories that trouble the dimensions of masculinity and discomfort the polite conversations about race. With impressive grace, Saeed Jones situates the queer black body at the center, where his visibility and vulnerability nurture emotional strength and the irrepressible energy to claim those spaces that were once denied or withheld from him. Prelude to a Bruise is a daring debut." —Rigoberto González; "From 'Sleeping Arrangement': Take your hand out from under my pillow. And take your sheets with you. Drag them under. Make pretend ghosts. I can't have you rattling the bed springs so keep still, keep quiet. Mistake yourself for shadows. Learn the lullabies of lint. Saeed Jones works as the editor of BuzzFeedLGBT."

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Raw, fresh, like the sap springing from freshly cut wood. I devoured this book and plan to keep it close. Do yourself a favor and buy two copies - you'll want to give one to your lover, your friend, your reading buddy so that someone else can experience this with you, jump in feet first holding hands. You'll be different when you come up for air.

Saeed Jones locates his voice where race, gayness, and the self they shape intersect with a larger, complexly populated landscape: *“Hunger is how we are / under a black lacquered moon • (Eclipse of my Third Life •)*. His identity does not adhere solely to the accident of birth but engages with the environment, or sometimes is claimed by force of circumstance: *“I’ve laced my eyelids with algae. // I blink emerald. / I blink sea-glass green • (Mississippi Drowning •)*. The imperatives of the world overlay, dilute, and sometimes cancel those of the man behind the poems. Opening himself to the world, neither hiding behind nor armoring himself with a prefabricated identity, Jones embraces the drama of living in a larger imaginative world: *Half this life I’ve spent falling out of fourth-story windows. Pigeons for hair, wind for feet. Sometimes I sing Stormy Weather • on the way down. (Postapocalyptic Heartbeat • IV)*.

This is a powerful and unsettling debut poetry collection. Many of the poems are brutal and violent, dark and sexual (and not in a loving way). Suicide is a major theme, but the language is startling and also beautiful at times. At first, I wasn't really connecting with these poems because they were making me too uncomfortable, but the more time I spent with them, the more I came to appreciate their rawness and power. This isn't a collection where you'll find yourself relating to the speaker (at least I hope not). Rather, this is a collection to open your eyes about the difficult lives some

experience. "If I ever strangled sparrows, it was only because I dreamed of better songs."

Prelude to Bruise by Saeed Jones is a powerhouse of a poetry book. The last section of it, which feels somewhat biographical, I have no idea if it is or not, is just heart wrenching in its honesty and beauty. The pain present in these words is tangible. I highly recommend it, and it deserves all the accolades it is getting. This is the poetry that steals your breath and sticks with you long after the book is closed.

Such an amazing collection of poems. I had to read it for my Arts in NY class, but do not regret it one bit. We also got to meet the author and he was such an amazing guy, full of honesty and inspiration. Definitely recommend this!

some of the poems are gems, special moments captured in searing language. Rough, beautiful, with the aura of truth about them.

This is a beautiful book. Stunning, heartbreaking, insightful. These poems will stay with me for a long time.

This is one of the best poetry books I've read in the last few years, without question.

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