

The Autobiography of Leroi Jones

By Amiri Baraka



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The complete autobiography of a literary legend.

Poet, dramatist, novelist, critic, teacher, and political activist Amiri Baraka, born LeRoi Jones, vividly recounts his crusading role in African American literature. A driving force behind the Black Arts Movement, the prolific Baraka retells his experiences from his participation in avant-garde literature after World War II and his role in Black nationalism after the assassination of Malcolm X to his conversion to Islam and his commitments to an international socialist vision.

When *The Autobiography of LeRoi Jones* was first published in 1984, the publisher made substantial cuts in the copy. Under the careful direction of the author, the book has been restored to its original form. This is the first complete and unexpurgated version of Baraka's life and work.



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The Autobiography of Leroi Jones By Amiri Baraka Bibliography

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• 329 pages



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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

First published in 1984, this is a revised edition of *The Autobiography of Leroi Jones*, which includes the original text (restored by the author) as well as a new introduction. Born Leroi Jones in 1934--he became Amiri Baraka in the mid-1960s---he is one of the seminal figures of contemporary black writing, a poet, playwright, novelist, critic, and political activist. Even more than those labels indicate, however, Baraka has been at the heart of literary and ideological ferment since the 1950s. Early in his career, he was strongly influenced by the Beats. During the cultural upheaval of the Black Arts Movement of the 1960s, he moved uptown to Harlem, changed his name, and embraced a religion that was a hybrid of Islam and traditional African principles. And then, in the 1970s, Baraka turned his back on Black Nationalism and embraced Marxist Leninism. The autobiography, written in Baraka's inimitable style, one that we might call word-jazz, ends there.

From Library Journal

Although this edition of Baraka's autobiography restores substantial cuts made to the original Freundlich Books publication (LJ 1/84), the basic structure of the work remains unchanged: it covers Baraka's youth in Newark, stint in the air force, Beat years in Greenwich Village, role in the Black Arts movement, and conversion from black nationalism to communism around 1974. It is puzzling that this edition continues to disguise key people and publications. For instance, Baraka refers to his ex-wife, Hettie Cohen, as Nellie Kohn; poet Diane DiPrima as Lucia DiBella; and the Partisan Review as the Sectarian Review. What purpose can this obfuscation serve when How I Became Hettie Jones (LJ 2/15/90) has already named names? It will be interesting to see how DiPrima's forthcoming autobiography deals with the same scene. Recommended for libraries lacking the earlier edition.? William Gargan, Brooklyn Coll. Lib., Copyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Review

"The story of Baraka's metamorphosis is itself part of the story of contemporary literature's development." —*Publishers Weekly*

"Always a nuance ahead of everybody else, he is our more original writers. Nobody else comes close." —Ishmael Reed

"He is regarded by those closest to Black art as the nation's leading Black writer, which of course suggests that no other, however talented, has proven—in this time and place—more valuable to Black people."

—Ebony

Users Review

From reader reviews:

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Jose Brown:

The book The Autobiography of Leroi Jones has a lot info on it. So when you read this book you can get a lot of profit. The book was written by the very famous author. This articles author makes some research prior to write this book. This kind of book very easy to read you can get the point easily after scanning this book.

Manuel Porter:

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