

This book is a powerful reminder of this truth.

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Sanchez, Sonia. *Under a Soprano Sky*. Africa World Press Trenton: New Jersey. 1987. 101 pgs.

Sonia Sanchez, a 1985 winner of the American Book Award for *Home girls and Handgrenades*, and author of twelve books, has a new publication on the scene. In this book of poems, entitled *Under a Soprano Sky*, she chronicles our contemporary times and speaks to issues of the heart and the soul.

Sanchez' down-to-earth poems resound with colorful imagery which play upon the senses, bringing people, places and happenings into focus, and sharpens our vision. She speaks in iambic pentameter, she raps, and she's lyrical. Her tone is at once reflective, contemplative and inspirational - called a "blue-black sound" by Houston Baker.

As we read and move through the five sections of her book, we change cadences and experience a variety of forms - blank verse, haiku, tanka, elegies, formula poems, letters, fragments, songs and vignettes - slices of Black life in America and South Africa.

In these poems, the time and happenings are now. Right now. One of her first poems is dedicated to her brother who died of AIDS. The poet deals with death, coming to terms with and living through it. Sanchez then follows with poems about Blackness, identity and becoming for adults and children, the African Diaspora, the struggle of Black people in South Africa, racism, the blues, Black leaders and relationships.

After having begun our sampling of Sanchez' pieces with a poem bearing the title of the book which ends with lines..."under a soprano sky, a woman sings lovely as chandeliers," we end with a poem of hope. As a woman, a Black woman, and individual, Sanchez' persona in her last

poem, "Graduation Notes..." leaves us with these lines as she speaks to the future generation, the collective. "Know you as young heroes soon to be decorated with years. Hope no wars dwarf you. Know your dreams wild and sweet will sail from your waists to surround the non-lovers. Dreamers. And you will rise up like newborn armies refashioning lives. Louder than the sea you come from."

When this poet speaks, she rouses our thinking and feelings and urges us to seize the time, to deal with reality, to dare to be, to think, to feel and continue to struggle to be ourselves.

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Togane, Mohamud S. **The Bottle and the Bushman: Poems of the Prodigal Son**, The Muses' Co., A St-Etienne, Ste-Anne de Bellevue, Quebec, Canada, H9x 1E8. \$6.00 (Canadian)

"Does Civilization Mean Speaking the Language of an Alien Tribe", this poem by another Somali poet, is the question broached in the introduction by Mohamud S. Togane to his first book of poetry. I am not sure if the question is answered in this book, but I think his poetry shows us how well the bushman has mastered the tongue of this alien tribe. Togane is a poet of both daring and courage. This is reflected in both the content and form of his poetry. There are poets whose form is daring, avant-garde, but their content remains humdrum; and poets whose content challenges, yet their form is mundane. In Togane there is the perfect blend, content that shakes your complacency, and form that is bold.

In form, Togane has a totally eclectic, post-modern approach to poetic style. He uses alliterations without shame, and creates new words at will. The poetry is even wild looking on the page. His neat little stanzas are suddenly interrupted by long lists of rhyming, rhythmic single words on a line or a thick heavy stanza of words all run together. In almost all